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UN arms inspector facing backlash

By JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

RICHARD BUTLER, the sometimes abrasive Australian who heads the United Nations weapons inspectorate, may end up as the first Western casualty of the Anglo-American airstrikes on Iraq.

As the Security Council gathered yesterday on what diplomats dubbed "the morning after", several governments called for a fundamental overhaul of the UN Special Commission (Unscm) that has conducted an aggressive eight-year effort to find Baghdad's hidden weapons of mass destruction.

Their meeting came as Britain yesterday launched a diplomatic assault on foreign ministers around the world to win support for a postwar policy of containing Saddam Hussein.

and in his report to the UN Mr Butler conceded: "In statistical terms, the majority of the inspections of facilities and sites under the ongoing monitoring system were carried out with Iraq's co-operation."

The report named six locations where, Mr Butler said, the authorities made conditions which showed that Iraq did not provide "the full co-operation it promised on 14 November 1998".

When asked about Mr Butler's future, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, said: "That is a question I would prefer not to answer today. You have heard all the discussions going on — several governments saying we need a new structure, we need a new inspection mechanism. I don't know what that means, and I don't know what kind of structure they have in mind."

Russia is calling for a meeting of Unscm's 21-member advisory board next month to reconsider the organisation's role. France is also proposing that Unscm be replaced or reformed. "We need something which is really professional," Alain Dejammet, France's UN Ambassador, said.

Mr Cook said Britain had received "enormous support" in Europe, with many ministries and governments agreeing with his analysis of the threat posed by Saddam.

Yesterday during talks in London with Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister, he spelt out proposals for increased European Union humanitarian aid to Iraq and a new oil-for-food programme to ensure that more Iraqi oil earnings are spent on food.

Insisting that Britain had already formulated a postwar diplomatic strategy, he said this could not have begun during a military campaign. But now Britain would try to build a consensus for isolating Iraq and enforcing sanctions while tackling the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

The flurry of phone calls included those to Paris; Rome, Bonn, Washington, Moscow and The Hague. They follow grumblings in Europe that foreign capitals were not properly informed of the bombing campaign and widespread denunciation of Britain by Muslim leaders.

On Sunday Mr Cook telephoned Karam al-Kharrazi, the Foreign Minister of Iran, who currently holds the presidency of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Mr Kharrazi told Mr Cook of the Muslim world's "extreme concern" at the desecration of Ramadan by the airstrikes. Yesterday he spoke to Amr Moussa, the Egyptian Foreign Minister.



Ice conquest: the Ice Global Challenger flies through the Himalayas at the border of Pakistan and India yesterday. But success now may depend on Chinese politicians

'Don't stop me' Branson begs China

By HELEN RUMBELOW

RICHARD BRANSON was heading last night towards the heart of forbidden northern China, in defiance of the Chinese, and risking catastrophe in his attempt to fly non-stop around the world in a balloon.

The challenge of dodging north of Everest was dwarfed by his 11th hour pleas to get the Chinese to change their minds. The Virgin tycoon was speaking to "any diplomat that moves" from 30,000 ft up in the Ice Global Challenger cockpit, said Mike Kendrick, the

project director. Tony Blair, Sir Edward Heath and the Foreign Office were also trying every channel to prevent the Chinese forcing a landing. China's refusal to give permission to fly through its airspace ended the round-the-world hopes of a rival balloon team in February.

"We're effectively in an emergency situation," said Mr Branson, as he drifted above the Himalayas. "We did not choose to go over the Himalayas or this way into China."

The first time the balloon could land would be daybreak, on the Tibetan plateau, one of the most inhospitable and remote places on earth. Although the balloon crew has arctic rations, the barren desert is too high and windy for helicopters to reach. "The thought of asking them to land horrifies me especially there," said Mr Kendrick.

The crisis began at 8am yesterday morning, when China withdrew their permission for the balloon to fly into their country north of 26 degrees latitude. Mr Branson, and his co-pilots Steve Fossett and Per Lindstrand had permission to fly across southern China, but Operation Desert Fox last weekend

meant they had to head north suddenly to avoid Iran and Iraq. This has forced them to set another record in their attempt to circumnavigate the world: becoming the first balloon to fly over the treacherous Himalayas in the complete night darkness. A daylight crossing was first achieved in 1991 by Andy Elson.

Mr Branson said: "It was absolutely exhilarating crossing the Himalayas in the sunshine. I have never seen anything so beautiful. But now it is dark and ice is forming on the top of the balloon as we head for Everest."



INSIDE

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Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, placed telephone calls with foreign ministers around the world in an attempt to ward off the widespread criticism of the airstrikes on Iraq.

At the same time, diplomats and security officials in the Gulf expressed fears yesterday that revenge for the air raids on Iraq could begin with terrorist attacks on opponents of Saddam living in Britain.

Kuwait officials said they had already stepped up security to guard Britons in Kuwait and revealed that terrorist threats were made yesterday to its embassy and offices in London.

In New York, Britain and the United States repeated their strong support for Mr Butler, who struggled off calls for his resignation and denied that he had colluded with the United States over the timing of his report. But UN officials said it was unclear if they could withstand a groundswell of criticism of Mr Butler.

The Iraqi claim the Unscm team was allowed access to more than 400 sites.

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Octuplets well

The world's only surviving octuplets were in critical condition in a hospital in Houston, Texas. They were born over the last two weeks, ten weeks premature, and ranged in weight between 1lb and 1lb 10oz. Page 3

Markets rally

A Wall Street rally and an IMF report cheered the London stock market, with the FTSE 100 closing up 134 points at 5876. At one point the Dow Jones index in New York broke through the 9000 mark. Page 21

Israel election

The Israeli Knesset voted overwhelmingly for early elections after a day during which Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, faced attacks from left and right over his decision to freeze the Wye peace accord with the Palestinians. Page 12

Lockerbie's 270 are remembered

By ALAN HAMILTON

MEMORIAL services in Scotland, England and the United States yesterday marked the tenth anniversary of the Lockerbie air disaster. At the same time America said it would seek "additional measures" if Libya does not hand over two men suspected of the bombing by February.

As relatives and friends honoured the memory of the 270 who died when PanAm flight 103 was blown to pieces over the Scottish Borders, victims' representatives expressed concern that the Anglo-US airstrikes on Iraq could affect the handover of the suspects, whom Britain and the US want tried in The Netherlands before Scottish judges.

Last night the prospect of the suspects being brought to justice receded further when Colonel Muammar Gaddafi called for them to be tried by an international court that included Libyan judges. In an interview broadcast on Dutch television, the Libyan leader

claimed he wanted a compromise. "The door must stay open. We are not saying no: we will do everything to reach a solution. An international court is the solution, with judges from America, Libya, England and other countries."

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Britain's UN Ambassador, last night expressed "grave disappointment" at Libya's failure to surrender the men.

Peter Burtleigh, US Ambassador at the UN, told its Security Council his Government was running out of patience. "Some say that the Libyan Government is moving to accept our offer, we certainly hope so. The signals are still mixed."

Yesterday the Duke of Edinburgh laid a wreath on behalf of the Queen in Lockerbie cemetery and the Duke of York joined relatives for a service of remembrance in Westminster Abbey.

Town remembers, page 10

NHS sex change allowed

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THREE transsexuals may have their sex-change operations on the National Health Service after winning a High Court test case.

They won a landmark ruling against North West Lancashire Health Authority's decision not to pay for operations, which cost some £7,000-£9,000 each, which medical specialists say are crucial to completing their male-to-female transformation.

Mr Justice Hadden, at the High Court in London, held that the authority's decision was "unlawful and irrational" and taken without considering the "proper treatment of a recognised illness". Miss A, 21, Miss D and Miss G, both 50, were refused surgery after it was decided that none had shown an "overriding clinical need" for treatment.



Love bangle and ring

Scruffy vicar with heart of gold leaves £5m

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER vicar who was the son of a baronet but lived on a council estate and drove a battered old van has left more than £5 million in his will.

The Rev Sir James Roll, Vicar of the rundown parish of St John's, Dagenham, Essex, from 1958 until 1983, was known for his clerical collar that was two sizes too large, his ill-fitting suits and generally shabby demeanour. He never married and his only companion at the end was a terrier, Lucy.

But when he was not preaching or

visiting parishioners on the desolate council estates that once were in his cure, he was secretly studying the stock market and making shrewd investments in insurance schemes.

Despite his background, Sir James made most of his fortune himself. He kept it secret from nearly everyone who knew him until he died in February this year, aged 87.

Lynn Foster, a friend and former churchwarden of St John's, said: "I thought we would have to raise money for his funeral, so I was stunned to hear how much he left. I knew he had some money, but he invested it wisely

in insurance schemes and that must have been his secret."

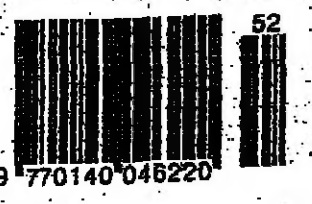
The Rev Roger Gayler, of nearby St Mark's Church, said: "He was the archetypal scruffy old vicar, with a heart of gold. His dog collar didn't fit, his mac had certainly seen better days, he drove a battered old van and lived in an ordinary house on a council estate."

"He wasn't mean: money just didn't matter to him. He was interested in other people, not in himself. When I came here in 1975 he was already approaching retirement. He had this enormous, cathedral-style church but a declining population."

Sir James, whose estate was valued at £5,387,216, left £200,000 to a variety of children's, homeless and animal charities; most went to his elderly step-sister and other distant relations. He also left £10,000 to St Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea, where he had a home. He used to take deprived children there on holiday and he spent his later years there.

The Rev Stephen Jones, Rector of St Clement's, said: "James was a kind and generous person, fond of children and animals. Heaven's above, we had no idea he had so much money — it was obviously not important to him."

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Rail travellers face huge disruption

A power struggle for union posts could lead to strikes, reports Arthur Leathley

RAIL travellers are facing industrial action on several fronts as hard-line union members press for greater militancy across the rail network. An intense struggle for power has broken out at the two main rail unions, with members of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party leading demands for radical change. Campaigning in key union elections is expected to lead to further industrial action in the new year and the threat of more widespread disruption later.

Left-wing activists are pressing the unions to flex their muscle in disputes with London Underground, maintenance firms and some of the busiest train operators, including Connex and Virgin Rail.

London Underground will today seek a High Court injunction

against the RMT, the biggest rail union, unless it calls off two 24-hour strikes starting on New Year's Eve and January 3.

The Socialist Labour Party scored its first significant victory this year in winning the leadership of the train drivers' union, Aslef. Dave Rix, its candidate, ousted Lew Adams, the moderate general secretary.

Now Mr Scargill's party has its sights on controlling the 60,000-strong RMT, the most militant rail union, which is staging elections for two of its top three posts.

Senior left-wingers are looking to win power on the back of a pledge to scupper the sell-off of London Underground and to win huge pay in-

creases for thousands of rail workers.

Bob Crow, an SLP member, is the increasingly powerful assistant general secretary of the union and is tipped to become general secretary when Jimmy Knapp steps down. Greg Tucker, a hard-line leftwinger who in the past has called on union members to back SLP candidates, has also been nominated for the top post.

Mr Scargill's supporters are now pressing for Pat Sikorsky, another prominent SLP member, to take over the other assistant general secretary post in elections next month.

Mr Sikorsky, a former London Underground guard, is backed by hard-line branches which are press-

ing for radical change in the union's dealings with train operators, London Transport and railway maintenance companies. He will challenge the moderate Vernon Hince, who currently holds the post.

Mr Sikorsky accused the Labour Party of "turning its back" on the rail industry with its plans to "privatise" the Tube and refusal to return main line railways to public ownership. "John Prescott, before the election, was saying he was going to buy back Railtrack. He was going, basically, to take the railways back into public ownership and under public control," he said.

"Not only has he failed to do that with the main line railways, he is going to privatise London Under-

ground. All the talk and all the bluster from John Prescott about extra regulations for the railways has ended with nothing."

Militant trade union activists argue that next year will be crucial to the future of unions in the rail industry. They are pressing rail workers to take action in protest at job losses and moves to extend private running of the industry as it moves further into the private sector.

Mr Knapp is also under personal attack. In a recent edition of the extreme-left *Socialist Outlook* newspaper he was accused of allowing a "continual slow decline in the union's fortunes rather than upset his base in the bureaucracy."

Mr Tucker wrote recently that the

elections were crucial to the RMT's future: "How the Left responds will determine the future of the union, even its survival, for years to come."

Senior moderate figures in the RMT fear that the party could be taken over by the Left because of the lethargy of many members. Mr Rix won the leadership of Aslef on a turnout of under 50 per cent and the RMT leadership is trying to whip up interest among non-militant members.

Mr Sikorsky recently called an "urgent meeting" of all RMT members of the SLP, believed to number up to 100. A letter, written on SLP paper and signed by him, said it was to "discuss the current situation in the union and in the industry". The letter added: "Your discretion regarding this letter and the meeting would be appreciated."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ministers 'go easy' on dictators

The Government has been accused of putting trade ahead of human rights in a highly critical report by the all-party Foreign Affairs Select Committee. The report said that ministers promoted human rights less forcefully in countries in which Britain had major trade interests, such as China and Indonesia. It also expressed concern about continuing arms sales to regimes under which there had been human-rights abuses.

Donald Anderson, the Labour chairman of the committee, said: "The temptation is to be strong [only] in weak countries. Indonesia was clearly a country where there were substantial projects, including arms purchases, in prospect."

Wildlife fears

Ministers are to push for tough new laws to protect wildlife sites after claims that increasing amounts of land are being developed or damaged. Environmental pressure groups said that the Government had failed to implement any measures to protect wildlife since it took office.

Pinochet appeal

Lord Lamont of Lerwick, the former Chancellor, urged the Home Secretary to release General Augusto Pinochet temporarily from house arrest so that he could celebrate Mass with his family at Christmas. A spokesman for Jack Straw said that bail conditions were a matter for the courts.

Welsh contest

Alun Michael, the Welsh Secretary, is to contest the Mid and West Wales seat for the Welsh assembly in his campaign to become its leader. His leadership rival, Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, has already been selected to fight the Cardiff West seat for the assembly.

Immigrants fine

Lorry drivers will be fined £2,000 for every illegal immigrant they carry into the country, the Government confirmed yesterday. Mike O'Brien, the Immigration Minister, said that almost 8,000 people had entered Britain this year hidden in the backs of lorries and other vehicles.

MP lists spoon

Ann Widdecombe, the Shadow Health Secretary, has declared a bent spoon in the Commons' Register of Members' Interests. It is made of stainless steel, but has a potential value of £17,000 because it was lent by Uri Geller and given to the Tory MP when they met on *Call My Bluff*.

Corruption by officers could cost Yard £50m

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE Government faces a bill of up to £50 million in costs and compensation for miscarriages of justice uncovered by corruption investigations.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, was given the figure by Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and John Stevens, his deputy and head of the anti-corruption drive, after a confidential review into the problems of tackling corruption in London.

Their report was drawn up to help the Home Office to budget for the heaviest sums the Yard might face in the early years of the next century. It is based on the possibility that 200 cases being investigated in "Operation Stain" will all result in quashed convictions.

Details of Home Office compensation in cases of miscarriage are confidential but are believed to include awards of up to £20,000 for each year in jail. If all 200 cases were reversed, it would cost the Yard at least £4 million in compensation for each year that the convicted criminals had spent in jail and on remand in custody. In addition, police would face substantial bills for the costs of the original prosecutions and work by defence lawyers on appeals.

Many of the allegations involve the fabrication of evidence, such as planting weapons, and in at least one case

tampering with scientific evidence. Senior officers acknowledge that the full picture of corruption may take several years to emerge.

Five possible miscarriages of justice have already been uncovered. The first will reach the Court of Appeal next month. The appeal by George Ellis, 38, jailed for 14 years last year for robbery, is not expected to be challenged by the Crown Prosecution Service. He has been released on bail.

Another case involves Abraham Shakes, 28, who was released on bail yesterday and given leave to appeal. He is serving eight years for an armed robbery case involving Keith Garner, a former detective who last month pleaded guilty to corruption.

Forty-five suspended officers and 15 serving officers face charges. Other former officers have been charged or are under investigation.

In 1996-97, the last period for which figures are available, the Yard paid out more than £2.4 million in damages to settle claims including assault and false imprisonment.

Scotland Yard said last night that miscarriage cases were still being reviewed and "it is not possible at this stage to put an accurate figure on any potential costs. The worst-case scenario is nothing more than speculation."



George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, met the 1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Portadown yesterday

Maze leave for 170 at Christmas

By MARTIN FLETCHER

MORE than 170 terrorists, including infamous killers, will be allowed out of the Maze for ten days' Christmas leave tomorrow, leaving barely 100 prisoners in a jail that held 500 as recently as this summer.

Those being allowed home include Michael Stone, who killed three republicans at Milltown Cemetery; Johnny Adair, the loyalist who masterminded a campaign of terror in which more than 20 Roman Catholics were murdered; and

Patrick Magee, the Brighton bomber. Another who may get out is Sean Kelly, the IRA man jailed for life for the Shankill Road fish-shop bomb in which nine Protestants died. Kelly's target was Adair, whose Ulster Freedom Fighters met in a room above the shop.

South of the border, officials said that the four-man Balcombe Street gang, which terrorised London in the 1970s, is likely to be allowed home for Christmas.

Some observers saw the releases as a further inducement to the IRA to make

the downpayment of weaponry being demanded by Unionists as a condition of Sinn Féin entering Northern Ireland's new executive.

The Maze is likely to be as empty this Christmas as at any time since it was opened as an internment camp in 1971. 225 terrorists have been freed under the Good Friday accord. Northern Ireland's Prison Service in any case operates a generous home-leave scheme, arguing that it helps inmates to maintain family links and reduces the chances of reoffending.



Kelly, fish-shop bomber may be allowed home

Say 'bonjour' to the new face of rugby

By MARK SOUSTER

THIERRY LACROIX, who two years ago turned down a film role as the villain in a French thriller, is to be the new face of domestic rugby on British terrestrial television.

Lacroix, 31, the former France player, has been chosen to present a Channel 4 magazine programme that begins on January 2 and that will run, initially, for 22 weeks. According to Neil Duncan, managing director of Chrysalis Television, makers of the programme, Lacroix is "the Eric Cantona of rugby — a real character, bright and intelligent, someone who will bring a fresh approach to coverage of the sport". Lacroix got the job after Jeremy Goscott turned it down.

The hour-long programme, called *Inside Rugby with Thierry Lacroix*, will be shown on Saturdays at 10am and is intended to attract a younger audience without alienating the



Lacroix keeping in touch

sport's traditional viewer. The show will be more of a review and preview than its predecessors, *Rugby Special* on BBC and *Channel 5's Rugby Express*. The BBC is resurrecting its own highlights coverage in *Sunday Grandstand* in the new year.

Lacroix, one of four former France internationals now playing club rugby in the Allied Dunbar Premiership 1, in-

tends combining his career at Harlequins, for whom he expects to play for another four years, with his new role. "I like to do something different: in front of the camera I don't feel the pressure — perhaps because I am used to kicking," he said.

"This is a new challenge which keeps in touch with rugby. I had to turn down the film part because I was playing rugby in Natal at the time, but the producers felt that with my broken nose I would be perfect for the part of a gangster!" Lacroix rejected an offer to join a French station in a full-time capacity in 2000 because of his desire to settle permanently in England.

Under Mark Sharman, the new head of sport, Channel 4 intends to increase its mainstream sports coverage and sees long-term potential in rugby. Mr Duncan said: "Channel 4 have got ambitions for the sport. This is a foot in the door."

Green check on showroom cars

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

ALL new cars sold in Britain will be required to carry "green" labels showing how environmentally friendly they are, under an agreement made in Brussels yesterday.

The Europe-wide scheme is aimed at giving consumers reliable information on fuel efficiency and the levels of carbon dioxide they emit. Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, said that it was up to each member state to decide how detailed labels would be.

He emphasised that those in Britain needed to be subject to a code so that potential buyers were not merely given glossy claims by manufacturers. "We do not want them to be public relations exercises for the car companies. They will need to be independently verifiable," he said.

The scheme, which will come into force in Britain next year, is part of a range of agreements signed by Europe's environment ministers to improve

air quality and to combat global warming.

A 30 per cent cut in particulates, tiny microscopic flecks of soot mainly produced by diesel vehicles, was agreed for lorries and buses by 2000. A further 80 per cent cut in this form of pollution, which is linked to breathing difficulties and heart attacks, was agreed to come into force in 2008.

Oxides of nitrogen, which contribute to smogs, will be cut by nearly a third in heavy goods vehicles by 2000, and hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide by 20 per cent by the same date.

Mr Meacher said: "Slashing particulate emissions by 90 per cent will help people who are particularly sensitive to air pollution, including those with asthma and the elderly."

Friends of the Earth welcomed the agreements but said that more needed to be done to cut traffic levels.

The hi-tech glasses that put Branson to sleep

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

RICHARD BRANSON is using a hi-tech slumber machine to try to put him to sleep during his round-the-world ballooning attempt.

Pulsed light and sound is fed to his eyes and ears to stimulate the patterns of sleep.

The device, driven by a laptop computer, consists of a pair of glasses fitted with light-emitting diodes and a set of headphones. When they are turned on, the wearer sees a gently pulsing light through closed eyelids, and hears a single tone with beats co-ordinated to the light signals. The idea, says Richard Hanbury, the inventor, is to simulate the natural rhythms of sleep and make it easier to doze off in the 10ft high capsule.

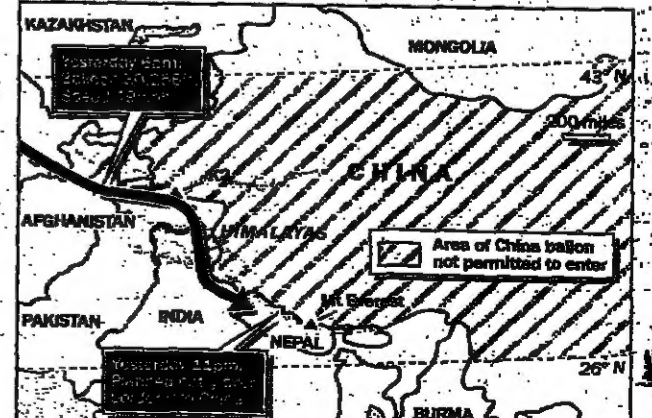
He developed the optical acoustical brainwave trainer, as he calls it, after he was paralysed in a car accident in the Yemen in 1992 and suffered continuous pain. He found

that the pain could be eased by stimulating his brain with the right frequencies: "I developed it because I was forced to."

Mr Branson, he said, did not believe it would work before he tried it at home. "He used it in the house on the Saturday before he left and he

was asleep in six minutes," Mr Hanbury said. "I have been told by the control centre that he had three hours of really good sleep after he used it in the balloon."

The device is still experimental, with no published data to demonstrate its effectiveness.



SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT.

This week the children of Knaresborough are celebrating the 150th Anniversary of their station as well as Christmas. www.railtrack.co.uk

RAILTRACK
The heart of the railway

Doctors praise mother in octuplet ordeal

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN NEW YORK
AND NIGEL HAWKES

THE world's only surviving octuplets were in critical but stable condition yesterday in a hospital in Houston, where for two weeks they had been the best-kept secret in Texas.

Neither Nkem Chukwu, mother of the eight, nor her doctors, knew until the first of them was born on December 8 how many more were waiting to come out. When an ultrasound scan revealed seven tiny but healthy foetuses, the news was kept under wraps until their birth on Sunday morning at St Luke's Episcopal Hospital. A team of 30 medical staff, including three doctors, delivered the babies by Caesarean section in 15 frantic minutes, each one being whisked into intensive care at Texas Children's Hospital, where they were on ventilators yesterday.

Their sister, older by 13 days, was also in critical condition but breathing by herself.



Brian Kirshon, who delivered the octuplets

Mrs Chukwu, 27, was praised by her astonished doctors as a model patient who tolerated "extreme conditions" to give her children the best chance of surviving. Having declined the chance to abort one of more of them for the sake of the others, she spent the last 2½ weeks of her pregnancy immobile in bed with her head

tilted toward the floor to relieve the pressure on her cervix. Mrs Chukwu also offered to forgo eating to give the foetuses more room to grow, and was fed intravenously.

Mrs Chukwu had been taking fertility drugs. She conceived triplets last year but lost them midway through her pregnancy. The couple have no other children. "She would go to any lengths to prolong this pregnancy," said Dr Brian Kirshon, who delivered the babies.

The babies born on Sunday were ten weeks premature, ranging in weight from 11oz to 11½ lb. The immediate danger is of lung and heart problems, and after that infections. Their hospital stay, expected to last at least two months, will cost about £160,000 each.

"It's really too early to say what the prognosis is," Leonard Weisman, the hospital's head of neonatology services, said. "Several have shown some improvement and several haven't."

But by yesterday doctors were already more optimistic. "We're very hopeful all of the babies will survive, but they're critically ill and we can't say for sure," Paul Savick said, adding that the survival rate for such tiny infants was now 85 per cent.

Mrs Chukwu, 27, was born in Nigeria, but is a naturalised American whose husband, Iyke, works as a respiratory therapist at a Houston hospital. She could be home by Christmas. Her husband was not present for the deliveries, but has seen the babies since.

The largest multiple birth was nine in Sydney, Australia, in 1971. All the children died. Three other cases of octuplets have been recorded in the past 13 years. In two cases, all the babies died. In 1996, Rosario Clavijo, 31, of Huelva, Spain, lost two of eight foetuses before birth, but then delivered six healthy babies. The octuplets top the record of seven surviving babies born last year to Bobbi and Kenny McCaughey, of Iowa.

Multiple births can spell disaster

By Dr Thomas Stuttford

THE greater the number of babies in a pregnancy, the less likely they are to survive: those that do are likely to grow up to be physically or mentally damaged. Even twin pregnancies present an increased hazard.

The authoritative book *Multiple Pregnancy*, published by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, describes higher order multiple pregnancies as the "greatest disaster in this field": the field being assisted conception. What is often hailed as a splendid medical achievement is, in fact, a calamity.

It may not have been possible to prevent so many foetuses ripening, but to allow fertilisation to occur after this has happened is regrettable. The true

heroes are the specialists and their staff who care for the babies while they are growing in the womb, the obstetricians who deliver them and the paediatricians who look after them once they are in their incubators.

When a higher order multiple pregnancy does occur, the doctor should discuss openly with the parents the possibility of converting it to one of twins, even though this involves destroying embryos. The lesson to be learnt from this pregnancy is that any woman who takes a drug to stimulate multiple follicular development should be under the care of specialists so that the ovaries may be checked before she attempts to conceive.

Body of missing girl found

By Russell Jenkins

THE body of the missing toddler Jade Lester has been found by police officers in a black binliner on waste ground near Merseyside.

The body was partially hidden by undergrowth beside a reservoir near the two-year-old girl's home in the Kensington area of Liverpool. Police began a search after her mother Sharon Lester, 22, was discovered beaten and stabbed to death on Saturday.

A 24-year-old man was yesterday charged with the murder of Miss Lester. John Park, an unemployed joiner, also of Kensington, who was further charged with burglary of her home, was remanded in custody.

Police had been hoping that Miss Lester had left her child with a friend or relative. A Home Office pathologist was conducting a post-mortem examination yesterday, but it is believed that the girl died at about the same time as her mother. The couple had not been seen for a week.

Police are still trying to trace the dead child's father, a task made more difficult because Miss Lester did not identify him to her immediate family.

Saudi nurse is found guilty of theft and fraud

By A Correspondent

ONE of the two British nurses jailed in Saudi Arabia for being an accessory to the murder of an Australian colleague was yesterday found guilty by a Scottish court of theft and fraud.

Lucille McLauchlan, 33, stole £300 from an elderly patient while she was working at Kings Cross Hospital in Dundee in 1996. She also forged references and was found guilty of handling a stolen bank card.

Sheriff Alastair Stewart, at Dundee Sheriff Court, deferred sentence until January 18 for reports.

Although she was found guilty of using the bank card, McLauchlan was acquitted of stealing it while working at Kings Cross Hospital. She was found guilty of using forged references, but cleared of using them to obtain a job in Saudi Arabia.

The court was told that a 2½-minute sequence from a bank security video showed McLauchlan next to a cash machine in Dundee. During the trial, she was unable to tell the

court what she had been doing there. She did not have a account at the branch.

Sheriff Stewart described her actions and the length of time spent at the machine as "highly suspicious". He said: "It is theoretically possible that she may have been doing something else, such as making a balance inquiry, but I suggest that is the sort of fanciful speculation that juries are directed to avoid."

The sheriff described McLauchlan's use of forged references, which she gave to the Speedwell Nurses Recruitment Agency in Dundee, as "a clearly thought-out and planned pattern of deceit with a view to obtaining employment abroad", and said that they contained "untrue statements" and "complete lies".

McLauchlan, who was released earlier this year after spending 17 months in a Saudi prison, appeared under her married name of Ferrie, and sat impassively as the verdicts were read out. She and her lawyer refused to comment outside the court.

Lovers die together at farmhouse

By Adam Fressco

TWO young lovers have been found lying feet apart with gunshot wounds at a farmhouse in Dumfries and Galloway.

The bodies of Peter Elliot, 19, and Catriona Cook, 17, his girlfriend of a year, were discovered early on Sunday at his father's farm three miles outside Sanquhar. Police are not looking for anyone else. Friends said that the two were very much in love and they could not explain why they had apparently taken their own lives.

Catriona was a show-jumper and a regular rider at the annual traditional Dumfries Riding of the Marches ceremony. She hoped to work with horses and was doing a one-year veterinary nursing course at Barony College, Partick.

A friend of the family said yesterday: "Catriona was a lovely girl and seemed to be very much in love. She spoke about Peter all the time but there was no talk of marriage. I had met him and I found him a very nice lad. What's happened is absolutely tragic." Peter Elliot and his brother Sandy, 22, lived on the farm with his father. His mother is remarried and lives in Sanquhar.

BBC tears a strip off producer for £100 streak

By Russell Jenkins

A RELIGIOUS programmes producer stripped off at an office Christmas lunch and ran naked around a crowded restaurant in Manchester for a bet.

Abigail Saxon, 34, who works on Radio 4's *Sunday Programme*, was challenged to streak twice around the fashionable Barca bar in Castlefield for £100. To cheers from diners at surrounding tables, she shouted, "This one is for free," as she began a third lap before disappearing into the women's lavatory.

The BBC has launched an investigation into the conduct of staff from the religious programmes department, based at the corporation's Oxford Road headquarters, who attended the team lunch.

The corporation is examining suggestions that Ms Saxon was egged on by a senior executive, David Coombes, an executive producer, who is said to have contributed £70 towards the £100 bet.

Both members of staff, who will learn the result of any disciplinary hearings in the new year, were at work yesterday.

The Rev Ernest Rea, head of the department responsible for programmes including *Everyman*, *Songs of Praise* and *Heart of the Matter*, was said to be "absolutely appalled" by the incident. Mr Rea, who was not at the meal, is said to have "gone ballistic".

Ms Saxon, who lives in Rusholme, Manchester, had been drinking at the lunch last Thursday and shocked her colleagues when she decided to take up the challenge. She went to the lavatory, took off all her clothes except her socks and emerged one leg first, shouting, "Here I come."

A member of Barca's staff said: "During the first lap everybody was stunned. Then she went around again and they were all clapping and cheering. It made their day."

"It was just a bit of Christmas fun. You could say it lived the place up. It was pretty crowded at the time. We do

not have any trouble with this so long as it does not happen every day of the week."

Barca, which is partly owned by Mick Hucknall, the Simply Red pop star, is popular with media executives, who enjoy its Mediterranean cuisine and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The streak was one of the main items of gossip at the BBC studios in the city. One insider said: "You can imagine how everyone is talking about this. If she worked for a department other than the religious one, then it may not have seemed so bad. But she is facing a real problem now and her job could even be on the line because of this."

The BBC spokeswoman insisted that the lunch was a team affair and not a departmental occasion. Staff had paid the bill out of their own pockets. She acknowledged that the mood of the lunch was "exuberant", and added: "It would be wrong to imply it is Ms Saxon and her alone who is being questioned."

Earlier the BBC issued a statement: "A Christmas celebration got seriously out of hand. The BBC would not under any circumstances condone such behaviour. Officials are investigating the matter and will take the appropriate disciplinary action."



Rea was said to be "absolutely appalled"

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Hollywood dresses up a classic

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN NEW YORK

SIR ALEC GUINNESS may have to tell himself that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery: Robin Williams has been mentioned as the leading candidate to reprise Sir Alec's performance in *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, one of the crowning achievements of British comic cinema.

Williams, the star of comedies such as *Mrs Doubtfire*, is the first choice of the director Mike Nichols for a remake of the 1949 Ealing comedy in which Louis Mazzini kills eight distant relatives to become a duke. The original has been called an "hilarious study in the gentle art of murder". In a performance that in-



Guinness as a D'Ascoyne, and Williams as Mrs Doubtfire

fluenced Peter Sellers, Sir Alec played Mazzini, and also seven crusty members of the D'Ascoyne family who disowned his mother after she ran off with an opera singer.

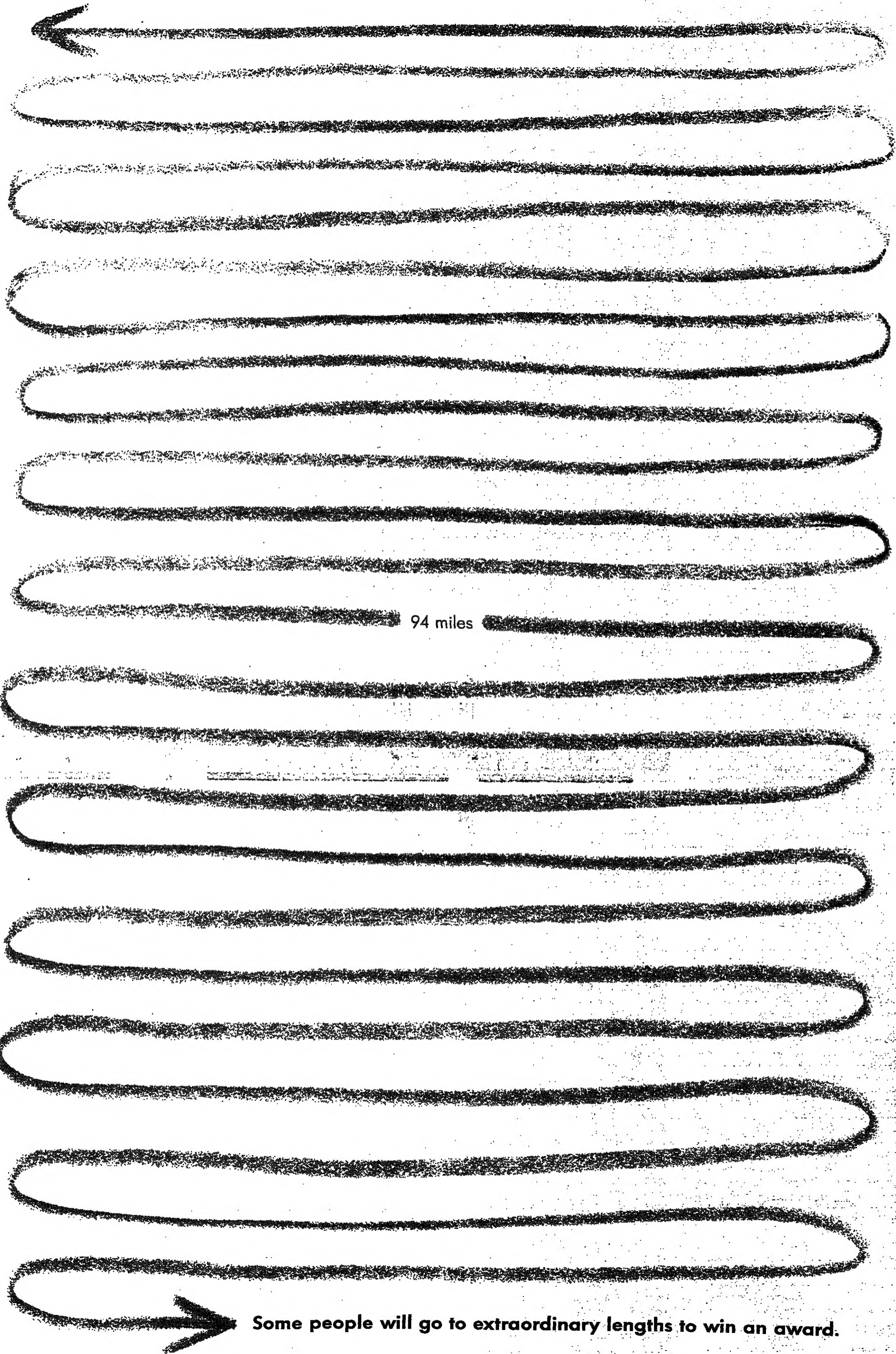


The remake is the latest instance of Hollywood's feverish plundering of past hits for good ideas - a symptom, most agree, of its inability to come up with new ones - in-

cluding, in the past 18 months, *Psycho*, *Dr Doolittle* and *The Nutty Professor*.

Eddie Murphy's success with multiple roles in *The Nutty Professor* may be behind the plan to cast Williams as Mazzini. Both actors had big hits early in their careers but have lost their edge with audiences - Murphy because of a scandal after he was stopped by police with a transsexual prostitute, Williams because of his sentimentality.

Comedy is on the up in Hollywood. Although the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences seldom recognises comedies, Cameron Diaz has been tipped for an Oscar nomination for her performance in *There's Something About Mary*.



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Judges let driver sue council for ice crash

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A MAN who was paralysed when his car skidded on black ice won the right to sue a local authority yesterday for damages of up to £3 million.

Geoffrey Goodes was left a quadriplegic after his car hit a patch of ice and skidded into a bridge on the A267 near Mayfield, East Sussex, in November 1991.

In a case of enormous importance to local authorities, the Court of Appeal ruled by a majority of two to one that East Sussex County Council had failed in its statutory duty as the highway authority.

Mr Goodes blames the council for failing to grit the road quickly enough after weather forecasts had given warning that safety action was necessary.

Recognising the "general public importance" of their ruling on the potential liabilities of local authorities, however, the appeal court judges granted the council leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

Judge Hargrove ruled at the High Court in January that, although Mr Goodes was blameless, the council had not breached its duty under the Highways Act 1980.

Upholding Mr Goodes's appeal, however, Lord Justice Hutton accepted his lawyers' argument that "pre-salting" was needed. The judge said that the grimmer lorries

should have been sent out at 4am, but did not start work until after 5am. Mr Goodes's accident happened after 7am.

Lord Justice Hutton said that the council had failed in its duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the highway was not dangerous. Lord Justice Morritt agreed that Mr Goodes's appeal be allowed.

In a dissenting judgment, Lord Justice Aldous said that, in his view, the original judge had "come to the right decision for the right reasons". The council had sent out its gritting lorries at 5.30am to clear the roads of ice by the start of the "rush-hour" at 7.30am and it could not be said the council had acted unreasonably, he said in his judgment.

There had, he added, been no reason to give the A267 priority over other roads when it came to gritting.

Christopher Wilson-Smith, for the county council, told the judges that their decision would have wide repercussions for all local authorities in terms of assessing their liabilities for breach of statutory duties.

Mr Goodes, whose damages award will have to be assessed at another court hearing if the council loses its appeal to the House of Lords on the issue of liability, was not in court to hear the decision.

£9.2m award for accident victim

By SUE LAPPIN

A MAN whose career was destroyed when he was left almost totally paralysed in his limbs by a car accident was awarded record compensation of more than £9.2 million at the High Court yesterday.

The payout to Martijn Biesheuvel, 27, who is Dutch and lives in Amsterdam, far exceeds the largest previous damages awarded in an English court of £3.9 million. At the time of the accident, in May 1994, Mr Biesheuvel had just completed his final examinations in business administration at Bath University and had been offered a job with an accountancy firm that could have eventually earned him half a million pounds a year.

He and four friends were

driving to play football when the Vauxhall Astra they were in smashed into a row of parked vehicles in Bath. Mr Biesheuvel suffered a fracture to his spine that left him a tetraplegic. The driver, Andrew Birrell, and three other passengers suffered minor injuries.

The court accepted that Mr Birrell's negligent driving had caused the accident, which happened when he lost control of the car after overtaking. His insurance company, Eagle Star Insurance, admitted primary liability but disputed the amount of damages.

But Mr Justice Eady said: "I am wholly unpersuaded that I should make a finding of contributory negligence against Mr Biesheuvel."



The wattlebird: the male accepts that it must rear chicks it has not fathered, biologists found

Left in the lurch by flighty females

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

FEW males in creation get a worse deal than the wattlebird, a tropical waterbird disgracefully exploited by its mates.

The females mate with as many males as they can find, leaving them to hatch and raise chicks they have not even fathered. Why the males put up with this is a mystery studied for six years by American biologists at a nesting site in the Chagres River, Panama. The males are making the best of a bad job, they conclude.

The team, led by Stephen Emlen, of Cornell University, observed more than 1,400 noisy copulations between the dominant females and the much smaller males. They made DNA fingerprints of 465 adult and juvenile birds to trace parentage and proved that, as a cuckoo, the male wattlebird is in a class of its own.

The females practise polyandry, a sexual arrangement very rare among vertebrates, in which each female pairs simultaneously with a harem of males. Chick-rearing is not, however, part of the females' repertoire: they leave that to the males.

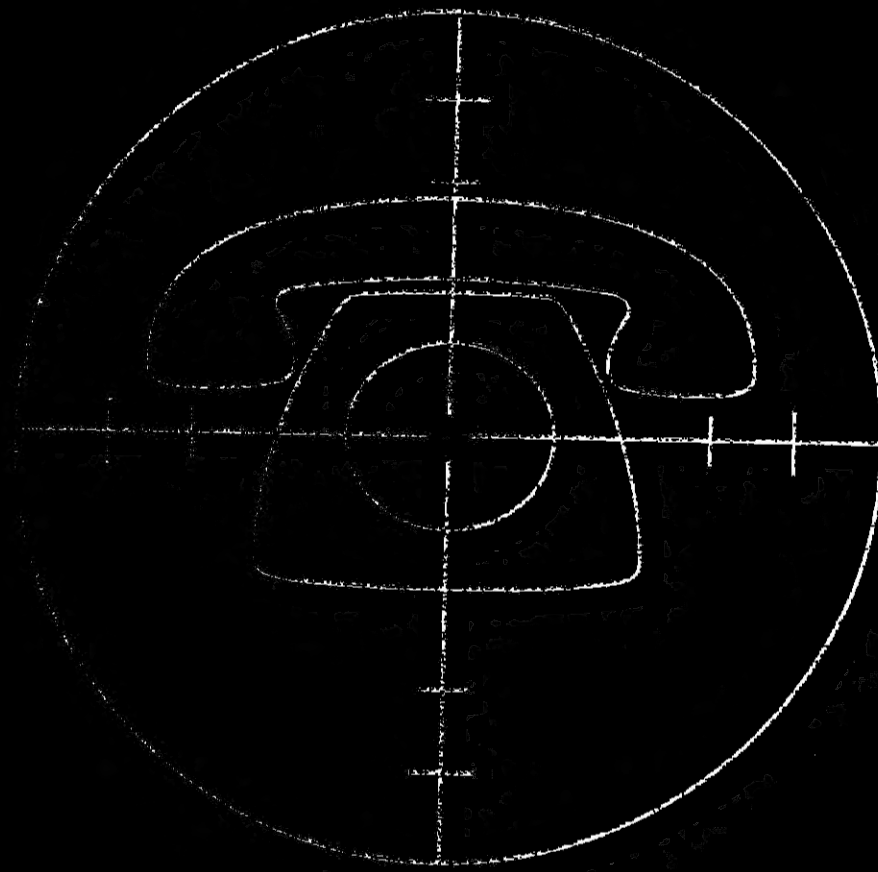
The study, published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, shows that three quarters of the broods raised by the males contain chicks that are not their own. Only if males are in

short supply, and the females' promiscuity is inhibited by lack of opportunity, can the males be sure that they are raising their own young.

"These results are surprising," admits Professor Emlen. "Biologists have assumed that males would only bear full parental responsibility for incubating eggs and raising the young when there is certainty that the young are genetically his own. Instead, a male jacana sits on the nest watching the mother of the chicks he will raise while she continues to mate with other males nearby."

The team concludes that male jacanas have simply learnt to make the best of things. "They seem to understand that, if they abandon mixed-parentage chicks, all the young — including their own — will die," he says.

And for the wattlebird, there is a worse fate than being a cuckoo — not getting to mate at all. In heavily populated areas, with limited space for nests, many males are never propositioned by a female. "I guess you could say that the males are lucky to be seduced and abandoned, considering the alternative," says co-author Peter Wrege, of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. "At least they are adding something of their own to the gene pool."



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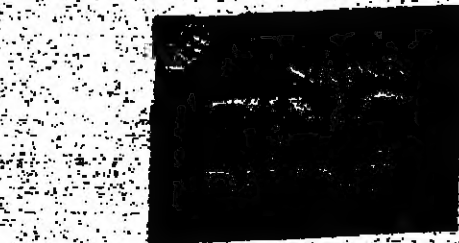
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total annual cost	£142.50	£385.96

Orange Everyday 20 includes 20 minutes of off-peak calls per day. Peak rate calls cost 40p/minute. Any additional off-peak calls cost 10p/minute. Orange off-peak period is 7pm-7am. BT off-peak period is 6pm-8am. Connection to Orange is subject to status and a one-off connection charge of £25. Connection to a new BT line is subject to a one-off connection charge of £116.33.

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Manhunt ends with Golden Gate suicide

Adrian Lee reports on violent end for a husband suspected of killing his British wife and daughter

A HUNT across North America for a man suspected of murdering his British wife and their daughter ended when he shot himself on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

The killings of Melanie Edwards, 35, and her daughter, Carli Fay, 2, shocked the wealthy community of Gig Harbor, 40 miles south of Seattle, Washington, on the Pacific coast.

She had complained that Carlton Lee Edwards, 37, her estranged husband, had been stalking her after a dispute over custody of the child. He went on the run after the shootings and police at first believed that he was trying to reach Canada to catch a flight to Britain, where he is believed to have relatives.

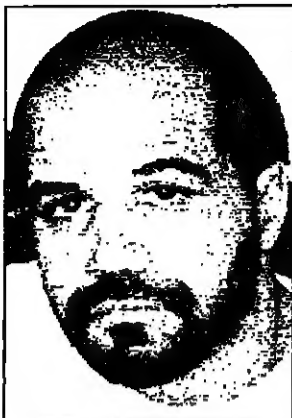
However, on Saturday a man matching his description shot himself on the Golden Gate Bridge after brandishing a handgun at a highway patrolman. It was confirmed last night that the body was that of Edwards, an aircraft industry worker.

The case was featured on the television programme *America's Most Wanted*. Mrs Edwards, a dental assistant, who left Britain six years ago to live with her eventual husband, had filed for divorce, claiming that he had tried to choke her. She took their daughter to live in a women's

shelter in Seattle and obtained a protection order banning her husband from coming within 500 yards.

Later she apparently relented and allowed him access to the child. Mrs Edwards was shot four times as she collected the girl from a social work centre after one of the visits to her father. The girl was shot once in the chest.

Police discovered that Edwards had resigned from his job with United Airlines two days before the killings and removed thousands of dollars from his bank account. A search of his home uncovered a box of ammunition matching that used in the murders, with 20 bullets missing. Also found were empty boxes for a new gun and holster. Edwards was first seen in a motel in Ore-



Carlton Edwards: subject of *America's Most Wanted*

gon, then was approached in San Francisco when the patrolman became suspicious about a car sitting on the bridge, which is infamous for suicide attempts.

A police spokeswoman said: "The driver produced a handgun, which he aimed at the officer. As the officer drew his

own weapon and retreated to a place of cover, the occupant of the car pointed the gun at his own head and fired a single shot."

Edwards, originally from Louisiana, was divorced from his first wife, who, sources said, was also English, when he met his second wife on a holiday in England. They were married in Illinois but later moved to Gig Harbor, on Puget Sound, an area popular with wealthy commuters.

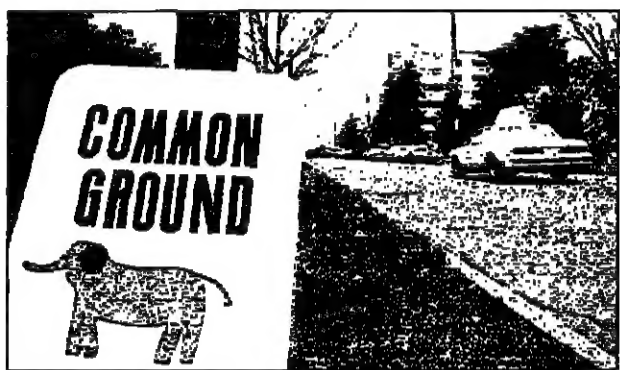
Neighbours said that the Edwards family seemed normal. The father played basketball with local children and held barbecues for neighbours. He was said to dote on his daughter.

Papers filed by his wife with the King County Superior Court showed a different picture. She wrote: "I am very afraid for myself and my daughter. Carlton has threatened to kill me many times since we have been together." She said the worst attack was in July when she and her husband argued about a dog. "Carlton pushed me up against the wall with his hands around my throat, choking me."

"He told me: 'I'll kill you before I divorce you, and as long as my parents are alive, you'll never get Carl'. He has a pistol he keeps in a locked case. I am afraid he will use it on me."

Despite her fears, Edwards was apparently given permission by the authorities in Seattle to keep a gun.

A friend of Mrs Edwards said: "She was beat up, once re-



The street on which mother and daughter were killed



Melanie Edwards: she said her husband had threatened many times to kill her

ally bad. She showed up with dark glasses and a black eye that looked like Muhammad Ali had taken her on." Social workers said Edwards seemed depressed and feared that his wife would return to England, taking their daughter.

Maureen Scott, who supervised Carl's handovers be-

tween her father and mother, described the girl as "smart, active, a bundle of energy who loved to talk. She had long, dark, curly hair. She had dark eyes. A real bubbly face. She looked more like her Dad than her Mom."

First-degree murder charges, punishable by the death

penalty, had already been filed against Edwards.

The Foreign Office said that Mrs Edwards's parents, who live in England, had been informed, but refused to give further details. A spokesman could not confirm reports in the United States that her husband also held a British passport.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Damages fight lost by dancer

A dancer who sued a production company for back injuries which ended his career lost his High Court fight for damages. Kevin Woods, 26, blamed the injuries on a series of complicated lifts while he was a principal dancer in a touring production of Lord Lloyd-Webber's musical *Aspects of Love* in 1993. Mr Woods, who used the stage name Kevin Andrew, claimed that he had not been properly trained by the company, Barry Clayman Concerts. However, Judge Anthony Kenny said that the company had carried out its duties to the dancer.

Driver killed

A mother of three was crushed to death by her car as she scraped ice from its windows in Higher's Heath, Birmingham. Jane Thomas, 41, a care worker, reached inside to turn the ignition but, with the gear in reverse and the handbrake off, the car shot backwards, pinning her under the front wheel and the kerb.

Players charged

The West Ham players Neil Ruddock and Trevor Sinclair are to appear in court today after an alleged disturbance outside a wine bar at Romford, Essex. Mr Ruddock, 30, is charged with affray after allegedly throwing a bottle at a car. Mr Sinclair, 25, who allegedly kicked the car, is charged with criminal damage.

£2.4m payout

The parents of James Green, 6, who was left severely brain-damaged after a mix-up led to his receiving a mismatched blood transfusion as a newborn baby in Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow, were awarded damages of £2.4 million at the High Court. North Essex Health Authority had admitted liability.

Clergyman quits

The Dean of Guildford Cathedral, the Very Rev Alex Wedderspoon, told the congregation that a canon had resigned and another was on leave because of marital problems. His statement on the unrelated cases came after a letter sent to a local newspaper, but not published, criticised clerical standards and secrecy.

Baby in shoebox

A newborn baby was found in a shoebox in a golf-club car park in Belfast. The couple who found him, on Sunday night, thought at first that it was a wind-up toy. Nurses at the Royal Maternity Hospital named the boy Christopher. He is reported to be well. Police have appealed for the mother to come forward.

Men shun help on cancer

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

MEN with cancer are far less likely to seek information about treatment than women and scarcely a third of sufferers who are unemployed make use of services available to help them.

A survey of nearly 17,000 calls to the CancerBACUP information service shows that people from the North are also more reticent about seek-

ing information about the effects of the treatment.

Repeated studies have shown that information and support to people with cancer reduce anxiety and uncertainty and improve the quality of life for sufferers, yet many of those who need help the most are not seeking it.

The report, published today in the *British Journal of Cancer*, says the findings show there is an urgent need to find out why significant sections of

the population fail to find and use the help that is available.

"Doctors and hospitals must allocate the resources to guide patients to where they can find more help and advice," Jean Mossman, chief executive of the charity, said. "There needs to be a guarantee that everyone affected by cancer — no matter what their background, age, type of cancer or where they live — is told about the help and support that is available to them."

The report, published today in the *British Journal of Cancer*, says the findings show there is an urgent need to find out why significant sections of

Deaf share in £7m lottery awards

THE deaf and disabled are among those who will benefit from £7 million of millennium awards announced yesterday.

Twelve new schemes, involving 2,000 "ordinary" people across the country, will be getting National Lottery money from the Millennium Commission.

They include £1.75 million for the Jack Ashley millennium awards for young deaf people, enabling 14 to 25-year-old deaf people to undertake confidence-building challenges. More than £412,000 will go to a scheme to give disabled people in Scotland the chance to design and carry out projects to improve access to the coun-

tryside for others who are disabled. Other awards include £1.37 million to establish a Welsh community fellowship to support local people committed to social, economic and environmental regeneration; £620,580 for improving quality of life in Enfield and Haringey in North London; £660,945 for a community project in Swansea; and £551,150 for a Liverpool residents' scheme involving a community-based training programme.

The commission has so far supported 187 capital projects on 3,000 sites at a cost of £1.3 billion.

□ A group of 20 nurses and carers at a

children's hospice, who won £2.3 million in the National Lottery on Saturday, said yesterday that the charity would be getting a share.

Hope House hospice, in Oswestry, Shropshire, will receive £100,000. The group held one of five tickets that shared the £11.8 million rollover jackpot draw. All its members at the hospice turned up for a staff training session yesterday.

A group of workers at a sauce factory at Aston, Birmingham, also won £2.3 million. They will get £139,000 each. An unnamed shop assistant, from East Yorkshire, also won £2.3 million.

Fraudster altered winners

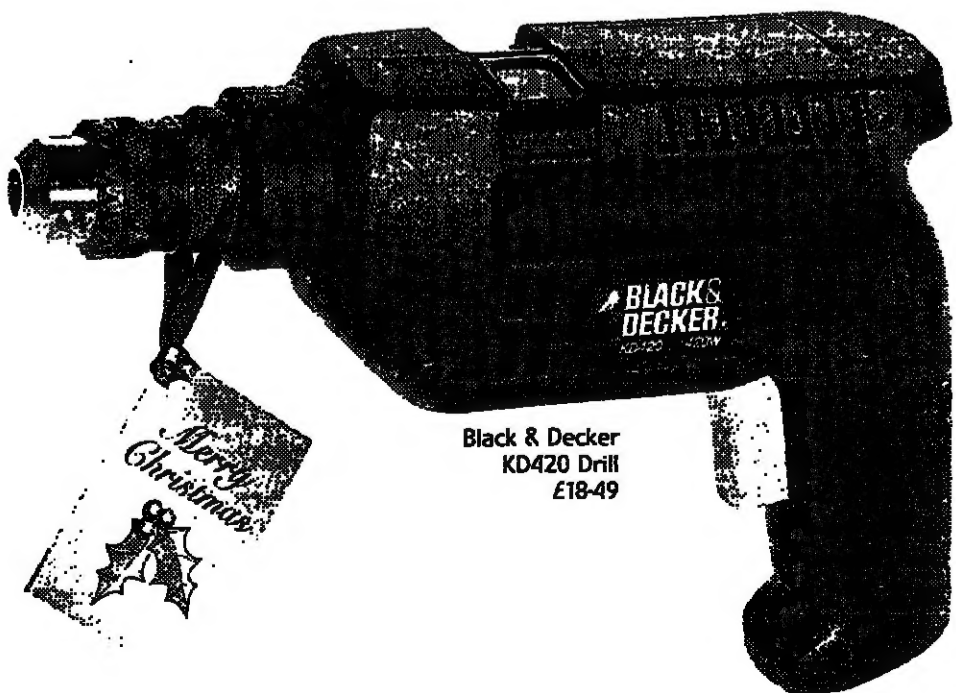
A COMPUTER operator on the *Racing Post* changed the published results of greyhound races in a betting fraud aimed at fooling bookmakers. Neil Taylor, 22, was sentenced yesterday to 180 hours' community service by Southwark Crown Court. Central London, after admitting alter-

ing the names of "winning" dogs in the newspaper's results service. The false results from minor meetings were meant to tally with bets he had already placed, but he gave himself up to police after the deception was spotted.

Taylor, from Harlow, Essex, who stood to win £800,

chose minor meetings in August knowing that the bookies relied on the *Racing Post* for the results. He was seen on security video tampering with the computer. Judge George Bathurst Norman said that Taylor had saved himself from prison by going to police and by pleading guilty.

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Sun shines on chosen few in ancient ritual

AT THE heart of the great burial mound in Co Meath, an exclusive, 21-strong audience waited expectantly in the pitch dark to witness one of the oldest, and certainly most magical, shows on Earth.

As the sun rose over low hills on the far side of the frosty Boyne river valley, its rays crept along the narrow, 62ft passage leading to the neolithic chamber, bathing the great stone slabs of the walls in golden light.

They stopped well short of the chamber. But that was merely the curtain-raiser. At precisely 8.58am the sun penetrated a narrow slit, or "roof box", above the outer entrance to the passage. The silence was broken by gasps of wonder and excited whispers as a sliver of light appeared on the floor in the furthestmost recess of the chamber, fully 80ft from the entrance.

Over the next 17 minutes, the chosen few saw a performance that man first watched with equal awe more than 5,000 years ago. The narrow beam slowly stretched the length of the chamber's floor in a flame-coloured finger so intense that it seemed solid. Then it gradually contracted back to nothing, plunging the chamber into darkness.

"It was absolutely wonderful," said Sile de Valera, Ireland's Arts and Heritage Minister. "It's an amazing event," said John Hill, an ageing Eng-

Dawn show at 5,000-year-old burial mound is breathtaking.
Martin Fletcher was there

lish hippy who said he was in Ireland to search for the Ark of the Covenant. "I'll never forget it in my whole life," declared a German with a long, straggly beard who described himself as a "priest of the old religion" called simply Arkana.

It is easier by far to get a ticket to the FA Cup final or an opening night at Covent Garden than it is to celebrate the winter solstice inside the Newgrange chamber. These people had applied between eight and 12 years ago. The waiting list is 800-long and closed. "Some people die before they get in," an official said.

Dozens of people had gathered in the freezing dawn to see what little they could from the outside. A few asked those with tickets to take in crystals and other objects to put in the beam. "I'm a healer and this is a sacred site," explained Elaine Swords, who came from Manchester clad in a coat of many colours.

Even those who do get in are

often disappointed. Yesterday was the first clear dawn since 1995, and only the third in 12 years. With cloud, the show is distinctly unimpressive.

Newgrange, 700 years older than Stonehenge and older than the oldest pyramids, is one of the earliest man-made structures.

It is a huge, round, earth-covered mound built with 200,000 tonnes of stone around 3,200BC by New Stone Age farmers, the first to settle in the rich Boyne valley. They surrounded the mound with a ring of standing stones. Their astronomical and engineering skills are breathtaking, but their purpose remains a mystery.

Perhaps they were sun worshippers hoping that the beam would reawaken the spirits of the dead whose cremated remains they deposited in the chamber's three recesses. Perhaps the beam of the male Sun entering the female Earth symbolised the bringing of new life to the dead of winter.

Within 1,000 years of the mound's construction, its outer walls had collapsed and it was forgotten. It was not rediscovered until 1699, when a local farmer named Charles Campbell stumbled across the exquisitely engraved entrance rock while removing stones for building.

Over the next two centuries, Newgrange was visited by tomb robbers, by the curious and by people who carved their names on its ancient surfaces. But not until an archaeology professor named Michael O'Kelly began excavations in 1962 did anyone realise its true significance. Dr O'Kelly found the roof box the following year. He guessed its purpose but it was another four years before the sun shone on the winter solstice and he could prove his theory. In 1967, he became the first man in 4,000 years to see the beam illuminate the inner chamber, but with one difference. Because of a slight tilt or "wobble" in the Earth's axis over those four millennia, the beam no longer quite touched the back wall.



Sunlight streaming along the entrance passage to the Newgrange chamber yesterday, a sight first witnessed 5,000 years ago

Carlton censured again by ITV watchdog

By ANTHONY BARNES

CARLTON, the ITV company fined £2 million last week for a faked documentary, was criticised yesterday for a discussion show prompted by the Omagh bombing.

The Independent Television Commission said that the programme caused "widespread offence in Northern Ireland". Audience applause and flashing lights at the end of the show were inappropriate after Omagh relatives and victims, still in shock, had taken part.

The commission ruled that *Omagh: Thursday Night Live Special*, broadcast on August 30, five days after the bombing, breached its programme code. It upheld 47 complaints from viewers, nearly all from Northern Ireland, who felt that the programme was insensitive in its approach and its treatment of contributors.

"It appeared that through a lack of appreciation of the situation in Northern Ireland, serious misjudgments were made," said the commission. The balance between politicians and Omagh residents had been wrong, although technical problems had played a part.

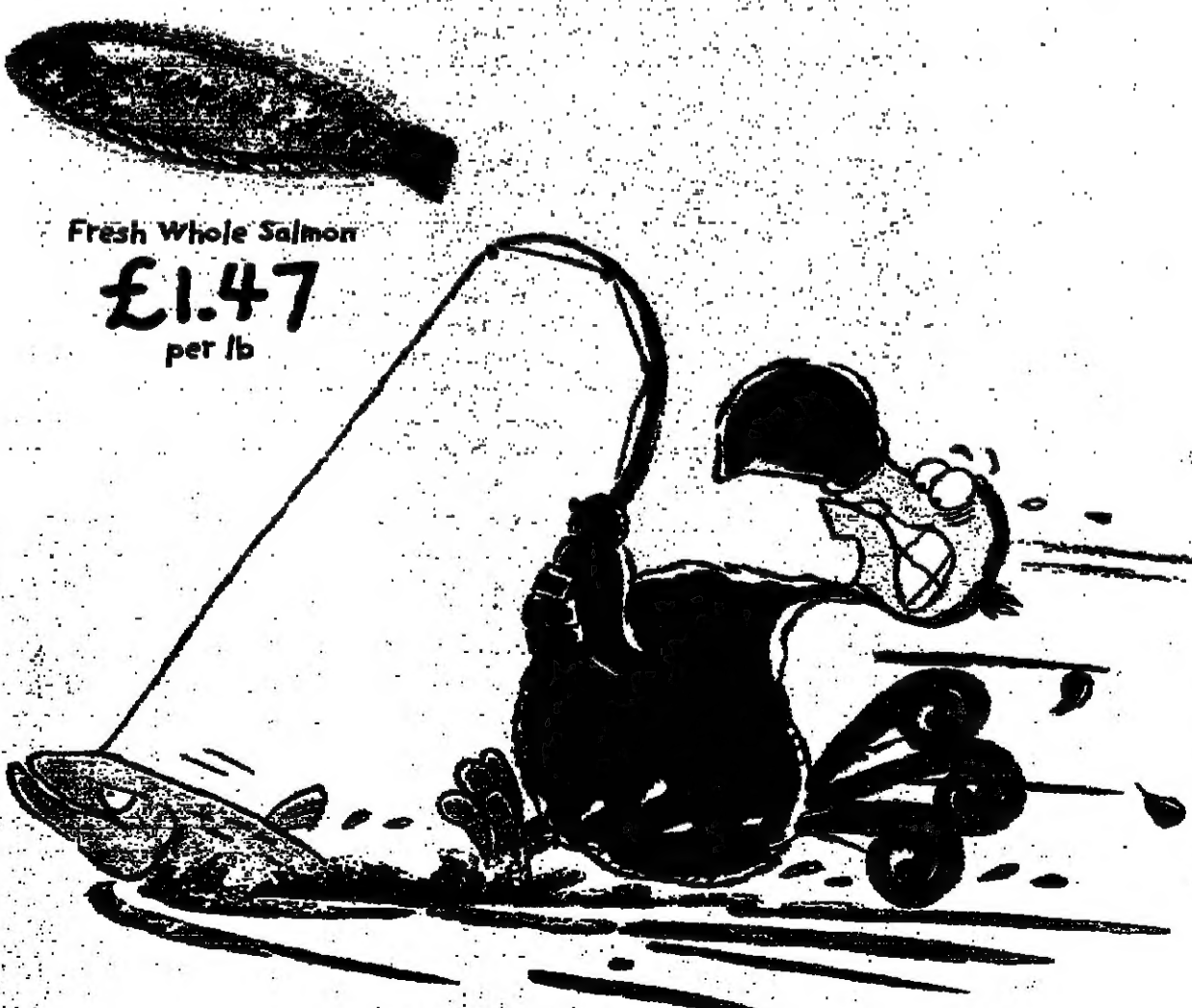
A phone poll on a "simplistic" question, "Will the peace agreement work?", had been insensitive to those watching in Northern Ireland, said the commission. Carlton broadcast an apology to Northern Ireland viewers on December 9.

The record fine imposed on Carlton by the commission last week was for *The Connection*, broadcast in October 1996, which purported to expose a new heroin smuggling route from Colombia to Britain. The company's internal investigation found that substantial scenes were faked, although it said that Carlton chiefs were unaware of it. The fine was imposed for ten breaches of the commission's programme code.

Complaints about Granada's *This Morning*, which arranged for three married couples to try the anti-impotence drug Viagra, were not upheld, although the commission said that the item came "very close" to breaching the programme code. (PA News)



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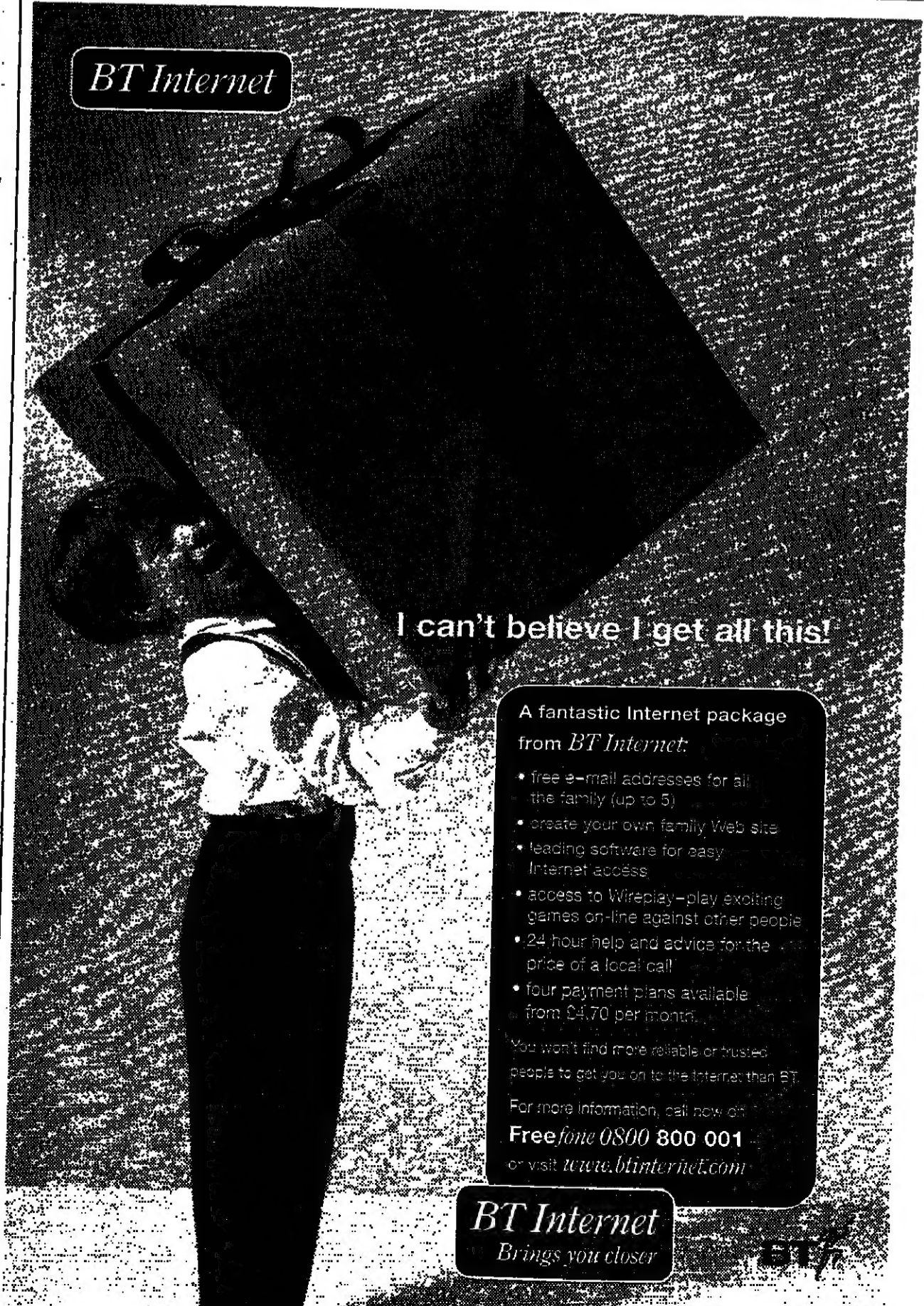
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Firm loses jail contract over £500,000 debts

A PROJECT to allow a private company to run prison workshops has collapsed after losing almost £500,000 in its first year of operation.

The Prison Service announced yesterday that the project at Coldingley jail in Surrey was to be brought back into the public sector and run by prison officers.

Wackenhut (UK) was chosen to run the industrial unit at the prison in an attempt to improve profitability of jail industries by introducing private sector efficiency. But the project was plagued by controversy after it was disclosed that the American-owned firm had been given a £100,000 loan by the Prison Service to buy raw materials and was allowed free gas and electricity.

The three workshops will be transferred back to the Prison Service next month after a failure to agree new terms for the contract, which involved running a laundry, a signwriting and shelf-building workshop at the prison near Bisley, Sur-

Project to run workshops will be taken over by the public sector, writes Richard Ford

rey. One hundred and fifty prisoners were employed in the workshops.

The firm found it difficult to win contracts for the shelves and signwriting, but made a success of the laundry. Prison Service sources said that officials expected to recover the interest-free loan plus the value of electricity and gas used by the workshops. The losses of about £40,000 a month are being met by Wackenhut.

It was the first time the running of all workshops inside a jail had been contracted out to the private sector. The Prison

Service said last night that it had always been a pilot scheme, and that the experiment could be attempted in future after a full evaluation of what had gone wrong.

A spokesman for Wackenhut said that the company's managing director was dealing with the matter.

Last night penal reform groups demanded to know the total amount of money that had been spent from public funds on the scheme.

Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "It has been a disastrous experiment of involving the private sector in running part of a prison. One thing we want to know is how much money has been expended subsidising Wackenhut to so little effect."

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "The whole privatisation project was flawed. Prison workshops are about rehabilitation not about making a profit."



The Rev Kevin Chandra and the Church of England advertisement in which he features. The caption reads: "He hates Christmas... shopping"

O come all ye alcoholics and ex-cons

Ruth Gledhill on the Church's new advertising campaign

THE Church of England is a refuge for alcoholics, for people who have gone through multiple divorces, had abortions or been in prison, according to its latest Christmas television advertising campaign.

Two dioceses have launched a joint Christmas campaign with the slogan: "You don't

have to be perfect to go to church this Christmas."

The 30-second advertisements, in black and white, represent a marked change from former campaigns, which were widely criticised by bishops and clergy. Instead of presenting the church as a trendy place for youngsters aiming at a yuppie lifestyle, the campaign depicts the suffering and depression of everyday life. The advertisement, which

would have cost about £250,000 if the advertising executives involved had not donated their services free, stars the Rev Kevin Chandra, 33, a curate in Walmley, Birmingham, who confesses that he hates Christmas shopping.

Actors are used to portray a child who will not eat cabbage, a man on his third marriage, a woman who had an abortion at 14, a former prison inmate, and an alcoholic.

The Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Rev Mark Santer, said: "I hope those who see it will catch a real glimpse of what's on offer at their own local church."

The advertisement was the idea of the Rev Robert Ellis, of the Lichfield diocese, and Sue

Primmer, the communications officer for the Birmingham diocese. Mr Ellis described their efforts to persuade the wider church to advertise on television as an "up-hill struggle". He added: "We have got to do this if we want to bridge the gap between the church and the marketplace."

It is the third televised Church of England campaign since the 1990 Broadcasting Act allowed religious groups to advertise on television. The campaign is sponsored by Jerusalem Productions, the broadcasting arm of the Jerusalem Trust, and by Christians in the Media, a group of Christians who work in advertising. The two dioceses have put in £8,000 between them. The campaign, to be broadcast on Central West, is expected to reach up to five million viewers.



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Ferries launch a new wave of catering

By Robin Young

THE Channel is the new battleground for culinary supremacy between France and Britain. A restaurant renowned for traditional British food is to open on board cross-Channel ferries, challenging the tres moderne cuisine offered by another renowned restaurateur on a French ferry line.

Travellers untroubled by the choppy waters between Dover and Calais will be able to dine in floating branches of Langan's Brasserie on seven P&O Stena Line ships. The brasserie, owned by the chef Richard Shepherd and the actor Michael Caine, is renowned for giving a cordon bleu flavour to dishes such as sausages and mash.

It will be steaming into battle against Jean-Christophe Novelli, the London-based chef whose services are retained by SeaFrance. P&O Stena's rival on the other side of the Channel. His restaurants, including Novelli and Les Saveurs, serve dishes such as boudin noir à la façon and poulet au ratatouille.

Kitchen and waiting staff from P&O Stena have been secretly working at Langan's Brasserie, in Mayfair, to learn its style. More ferry staff will be on placements in the new year and when the first floating Langan's opens, aboard the super ferry Burgundy early in the new year, Mr Shepherd and members of his team will be making cross-Channel trips to supervise operations.

Mr Shepherd said yesterday: "We are aiming to up the stakes in cross-Channel catering. The menu will include the sort of homely food that Langan's Brasserie customers love best: bangers and mash with white onion sauce, cod and chips, fishcakes with braised peas and that sort of thing." Prices, the ferry line said yesterday, "are yet to be set but will be highly competitive".

Other transport groups have associated themselves with famous chefs, with varying success. The French railway once retained the man

FARE SAILING

STARTERS

Poached egg with haddock in cream sauce
Mushrooms and bacon baked with Lancashire cheese
Black pudding with sauerkraut and bacon in mushroom sauce
Langan's seafood salad

MAIN COURSES

Seamon and leek fishcakes
Traditional roast of the day
Cod and chips
Bangers and mash
Liver and bacon with white onion sauce
Gammon in parsley sauce
Steak and kidney pie

DESSERTS

Crème brûlée
Tresle tart and custard
Bread and butter pudding
Coffee
Prices have not yet been finalised but P&O Stena Line and Langan's Brasserie are aiming to offer a choice of two courses with coffee for £13 a head and three courses with coffee for £18 a head

many considered the greatest of Michelin three-star chefs in France, Joël Robuchon, but the relationship quickly broke down.

British Airways' stable of consultants has included the Roux brothers, Virgin Atlantic tied with Raymond Blanc of Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons, and Emirates recruited Bernard Gaurin, of the Hyatt Carlton Tower.

British Rail, before privatisation, sought to ameliorate the image of railway catering with sandwiches designed by Clement Freud.

The railway company GNER recently won an international award from *On-board Service* magazine in the United States. Its catering is inspired by Eugene and Tom McCoy, of the Cleveland Tonne restaurant in North Yorkshire.

Leading article, page 17



Richard Shepherd: aims to "up the stakes" in ferry cuisine

Rod Stewart puts paid to girls' singing protest

Rock star emerges as buyer of painting that pupils fought to save, writes Victoria Fletcher

SCHOOLGIRLS who sang hymns non-stop to protest at their school's decision to sell a Renaissance painting have lost out to rock'n'roll. The depiction of the Madonna and Child was bought by the pop star Rod Stewart.

The Independent St Felix School, at Southwold, Suffolk, upset its 155 pupils when it decided to sell the 16th-century painting to raise funds for a new sports hall and theatre. Despite the musical protest, the picture was auctioned at Sotheby's last week and went to an anonymous buyer for £84,000.

Yesterday Stewart admitted that it was he who had bought the work by Raneiri di Leonardo da Pisa. The spiky-haired singer of hits such as *Do You Think I'm Sexy?* is also a keen collector of Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite works of art.

The 53-year-old rocker said he had no idea of the controversy surrounding the sale. He described the picture of an enthroned Virgin and Child sur-



The headmaster of St Felix plans to invite Rod Stewart to the school to pacify the girls



nors how much they valued the painting in the chapel. Somebody telephoned me to say what was happening and I went over to find them all singing loudly and refusing to budge.

"I had to go in to explain about how the new painting was being commissioned. They listened calmly to what I had to say before going back to lessons."

He added: "The governors decided some time ago to embark on an ambitious building scheme to enhance the school, financed mostly by the sale of existing assets. It was decided to sell the painting, along with one worth about £10,000, which hangs in my study, and several houses that the school owns."

The governors, who include Dame Stella Rimington, the former head of MI5, promised to allow the girls to choose a replacement tapestry or painting by a contemporary local artist.

rounded by St Anne, St Bartholomew and St Michael as "beautiful": its gilded tabernacle frame was "spectacular".

Still recovering from a spell of laryngitis, which forced him to cancel a concert for 15,000 people in Manchester, Stewart said: "I want the girls to know the painting is going to a good home where it will be loved and cherished."

Rick Williams, Headmaster

at St Felix, said he hoped that the painting's new owner would find the time to visit the school to pacify the girls. "We hope to invite Mr Stewart to the school soon so we can tell him about the background of the painting and where it hung," he said.

When they found out in October that the painting was to be sold, all the girls at the £12,000-a-year boarding school

refused to leave the chapel after morning assembly and stood singing hymns for over half an hour until the headmaster was summoned. They told him the picture was part of their heritage and should be preserved for future generations.

Mr Williams said: "It was a very dignified protest by the girls and a proper way to show their feelings. They just wanted to make it clear to the gover-



The girls wanted the painting, by Raneiri di Leonardo da Pisa, to remain at St Felix

Woman of 88 murdered in bungled raid

By Helen Johnstone

AN ELDERLY woman is thought to have been murdered after a burglary at a sheltered housing scheme went wrong.

Two men were spotted running from a flat where Hilda Tizard, a widow of 88, was found bound by her hands and feet and strangled. The raiders had ransacked her home in Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

Police believe that she was asleep in bed when her attackers struck last Thursday. The flat was fitted with a panic button, but it had not been activated.

Detective Chief Inspector Alan Ladley, who is leading a team of 50 murder squad officers, said: "We don't believe that people went there deliberately to murder her. It seems consistent with a burglary that went terribly wrong."

"The flat was ransacked but there was no evidence of a struggle. We assume she was tied up and then, for some reason, strangled. Whether it was to stop her screaming or not we don't know."

Police are trying to identify a witness who dialled 999 from a telephone kiosk in the town centre after seeing two suspicious-looking men running from the murder scene seven hours before her body was discovered.



Hilda Tizard: was found tied up and strangled

covered. Police went to the flats, half a mile from the kiosk, but they could find no signs of anything suspicious and left. Mrs Tizard's body was later found on the floor of her flat by a warden during a routine check of 30 elderly residents.

Mr Ladley added: "The man who made the call has vital information and we are appealing for him to come forward. We are reviewing CCTV tapes from cameras in the town centre, including those that might cover the telephone kiosk, to see if the caller can be identified or the two men spotted running away."

The block of approximately 20 flats in the sheltered accommodation called Poyninge has an on-site warden. Each property has an alarm button connecting residents to the warden. The resort has one of the highest percentages of retired and elderly people in the country.

The oldest resident, Ethel James, 91, who lives there with her husband, John, said: "Mrs Tizard was just a frail old lady. There was a cloud over the place when we heard what had happened. This is a wonderful home with a lovely Christian fellowship, and we are all encouraging each other."

Edith Ainsworth, 83, said that both she and Mrs Tizard worshipped every Sunday at a nearby chapel. Mr Ladley said that counsellors from Victim Support were working with residents to help them to come to terms with what had happened.

He added: "We have no clear motive and there is nothing yet to tell us if anything was taken or whether there was anything worth taking."

Mrs Tizard, who had lived at the flats for about two years, first moved to Bognor Regis about ten years ago. She grew up and spent much of her life in the London area.

Forensic scientists were yesterday still searching the site and are expected to be at the scene for several more days.

Gut reaction to computer game

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

A COMPUTER game that teaches the gut to relax has been developed by doctors specialising in irritable bowel syndrome, a stress-related condition.

The game uses biofeedback, a behavioural therapy technique. Changes caused by stress to electrical activity on the skin can be monitored from electrodes and transformed into a visual display. Doctors at the Royal Free Hospital in London adapted a game called *Evolve*, which requires sustained mental relaxation to transform a fish in a sea into higher life forms.

For the irritable bowel game, animated computer graphics were developed to simulate forward and backward movement through the alimentary canal. The animation provides a stylised image of the bowel through an endo-

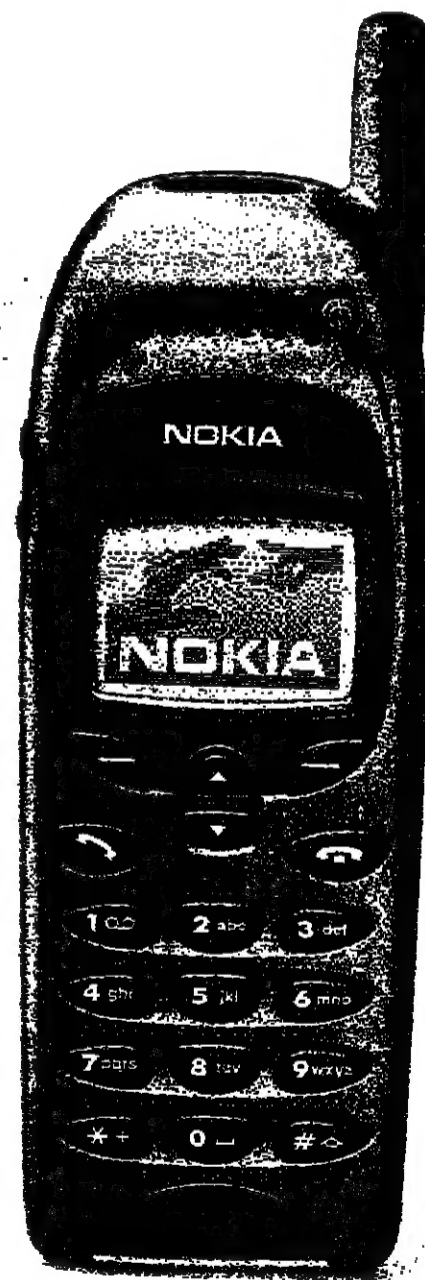
scope. Mental relaxation caused a forward movement through the bowel, while stress was translated into backward movement.

The game involved two tasks that could be performed only by sustained relaxation. The first required the patient to travel from the stomach to a point in the bowel where the dominant symptom was symbolised by a red screen for pain or bubbles for bloating.

For the second task the patient is required to relax long enough to change the screen to a graphic of a stream flowing through peaceful countryside — a "reward".

Half of 40 patients tested found the game very helpful and the doctors report in the *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of London* that it taught deep relaxation rapidly and effectively.

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Ten years on, a town remembers

Residents unite with relatives of victims at church service to mark anniversary, writes Gillian Harris

A SIMPLE church service to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Lockerbie bombing began in the town last night with a minute's silence in memory of the 270 people who lost their lives.

At 1.03pm, the precise time when Pan Am Flight 103 was blown apart by a terrorist bomb, the 700-strong congregation in Dryfesdale Parish Church stood with their heads bowed remembering the victims of Britain's worst air disaster.

The minute's silence, which was marked at simultaneous services of remembrance in Westminster Abbey, Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, and Syracuse University in New York, where 35 of the victims were students, was broken in Lockerbie by a pipers' lament, *Flowers of the Forest*, played by Fiona McCall.

Relatives of around 60 victims who made the pilgrimage to Lockerbie were joined by residents who have become friends over the ten years they have known each other.

Although public figures and politicians had been urged to remain in the background yesterday, messages from the Queen, the Prime Minister and the President Clinton offering support and encouragement were read out in church.

The Queen said: "Our thoughts and prayers today are with the families and friends of those 270 people from so many countries whose lives were tragically taken in the Lockerbie bombing ten years ago. Time cannot erase their memory. We pray that

on this anniversary the families will find solace together in quiet remembrance across the world."

Tony Blair's statement, delivered by Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, described the bombing as a "calamity made and perpetrated by men which has imprinted itself indelibly in the minds of the people of this country". He added: "My thoughts today are with the families and friends of these innocent victims in the air and on the ground whose lives were so cruelly taken away by an act of terrorism without parallel in our history."

Mr Clinton reminded the congregation that the bombing was a "cowardly act of terrorism" and vowed to continue the campaign to bring those responsible to justice.

Cathy Hurst, the United States Consul-General for Scotland, read his statement: "Ten years ago the families of those who were aboard Pan Am Flight 103 and the people of Lockerbie were brought together by the devastating loss they shared."

"In the intervening years the people of Lockerbie have shown tremendous kindness toward those whom they first met in the aftermath of the tragedy."

"I salute all of you gathered in Lockerbie who along with the families of victims from my country and elsewhere have turned sorrow into a source of strength for all who stand against terror."

The 30-minute service, conducted by the Rev David Al-



Wreaths were laid at the memorial plinth in Lockerbie to the 270 victims. "We will not rest till we have justice and truth," Father Pat Keegans said

mond, included prayers of peace, hope and love. Children from Lockerbie Primary School choir, who were not born when the jumbo jet exploded above their town, sang *Let There Be Love*.

It was an emotional day for those who chose to spend the anniversary in Lockerbie. The festive atmosphere which has captured the quiet market town since the Christmas

lights went on 11 days ago was swamped by a resurgence of grief and memories of the horrific events of December 21, 1988.

Earlier the Duke of Edinburgh joined local councillors, friends and relatives in a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial plinth to the victims in Dryfesdale cemetery.

Standing in the rain, Father Pat Keegans, the parish priest

at the time, spoke of his memories of the 11 people who died in Lockerbie when the plane demolished their homes. He recalled his wish that time could be turned back and the victims allowed to live. "But we live in reality. The reality is a bomb ticking away, unseen and lethal."

"That's why we are here today, in front of your stone of remembrance. That's why we

gather to say with one voice that we miss you, that you are not forgotten, that we know you are happy and alive with God in Heaven and that, in our minds and our hearts, you live on."

"Some would tell us that we should draw a line now at your tenth anniversary. We shall not draw any line. To do so would be an insult to your lives, to your families and

friends and to the people of Lockerbie."

"You will see us laying wreaths at your stone. We want you to be sure that these wreaths are not hollow, empty gestures but a statement and declaration full of promise. It is a declaration that we will not rest until we have justice and truth, until all responsible for your deaths are held accountable."

Duke of York joins families at Abbey

Alan Hamilton reports on memorials further afield

IN LONDON as well as Scotland, the disaster of Pan Am Flight 103 was remembered last night, ten years to the hour that the Boeing 747 was ripped to pieces by a bomb over the Scottish Borders.

In Westminster Abbey, the Duke of York, who visited the scene of the tragedy ten years ago, joined the bereaved families of 30 British passengers at a service of remembrance which has been organised eve-

ry year by the pressure group UK Families Flight 103.

As the names were read out, a candle was lit for each of them.

Some of yesterday's commemorations were intensely personal. At a free concert in Westminster Cathedral last night the Hilliard Ensemble and Fretwork, two early mu-

sic groups, performed *Cadman Requiem*, written by the Leicestershire-based composer Gavin Bryars. Bryars wrote the work in 1989 in memory of his friend and professional colleague Bill Cadman, a leading sound engineer of his time who died on the flight aged 32 along with his girlfriend.

"I was badly affected by

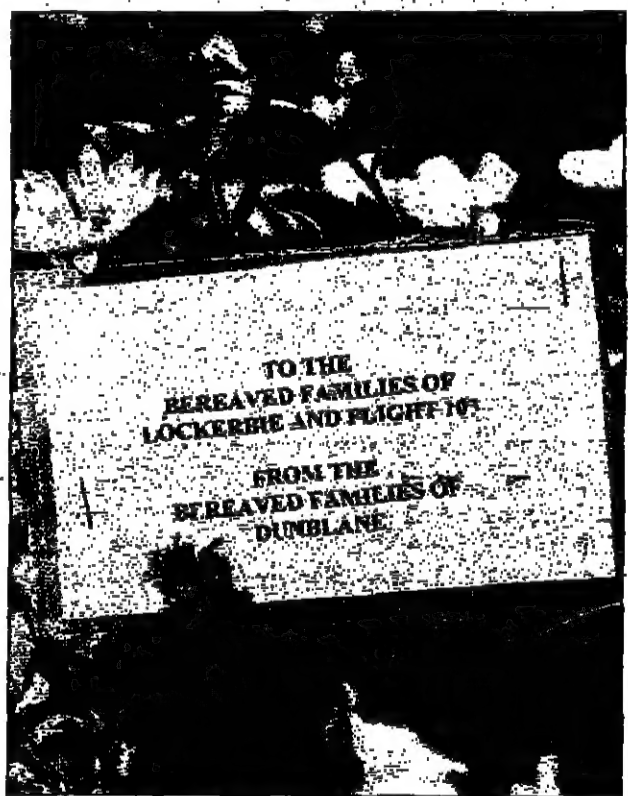
Bill's death: he was brilliant at what he did, and I wanted to do something to commemorate him," Mr Bryars said yesterday.

"Neither he nor I were practising Christians, so my Requiem omits the usual elements of damnation and forgiveness, and concentrates on the elements which speak of resur-

ance, like the *Agnus Dei*." The Requiem included a setting of the Creation Hymn, written in the 7th Century at Whitby Abbey by England's earliest known poet, the monk Caedmon — origin of the name Cadman. Mr Cadman's parents and many other members of his family were among the audience.

There were services in the United States yesterday to commemorate the American passengers and crew who died.

On Sunday, Bert Ammerman, a school principal from New Jersey, who lost his brother Thomas, addressed a church service in Lockerbie, and thanked the local people for their compassion and friendship. At the garden of remembrance at Dryfesdale cemetery in the town, Mr Ammerman laid a bouquet of flowers with the message "Tommy, you did not die in vain."



A tribute at the Dryfesdale Cemetery from Dunblane

Photos taken from chapel

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

PHOTOGRAPHS of victims of the Lockerbie disaster were stolen from a chapel which has become a shrine to those who died and which last night hosted a 10th anniversary memorial service.

The photographs, including a montage of smiling crew members of Pan Am Flight 103, were taken from the walls of St George's Chapel at Heathrow airport. Photographs of the memorial garden in Lockerbie have also been stripped from the chapel walls.

Relatives who had helped to compile the tribute to their loved ones heard of the loss, which happened several months ago, when they arrived for the chapel service.

The Rev David Smith, who jointly led the service, said it was distressing that the photographs had been stolen. "As the anniversary arrives, relatives of the dead look to the chapel for comfort, but this year there will be a feeling that something is missing. It will make their grief all the more hard to bear. Visitors come to the chapel and one of the first things they look for is the picture of the crew members. It is irreplaceable."

"I'm sure a relative did not take it and that it was not done maliciously, but the thefts have caused a lot of people personal grief."

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police at Heathrow said that they had no record of the thefts and that it was unlikely that they had been reported at the time.



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Saddam secret army 'to launch London attacks'

REVENGE for the raids on Iraq could begin with terrorist attacks on President Saddam Hussein's opponents in Britain. Diplomats and security officials in the Gulf feared yesterday the Iraqi leader would "contract Islamic terrorist groups" to exact retaliation for Operation Desert Fox.

Kuwait officials said they had stepped up security for Britons there, and revealed that terrorist threats were made yesterday against its embassy and offices in London. A leading Arab newspaper, *Al-Hayat*, published in London, reported receiving a telephone warning from an unnamed Islamic group threatening to bomb Kuwait targets in Britain. Many Iraqi dissidents live in London, including key figures in the Iraqi National Congress. A leading Scotland and anti-terrorist detective yesterday called the threats very credible. You can take it are very aware of the heightened risk.

Security checks and roadblocks have been stepped up in Kuwait City and officials at armed National Guards have been deployed around residential complexes where British diplomats and civilians are leaving Kuwait than the usual Christmas exodus, and

Fears grow over contract killers, reports Daniel McGroarty in Kuwait City

an increasing number of Kuwaitis were yesterday trying to book flights out. The radical Islamic group, al-Qa'ima al-Islamiya, which has killed 1,250 people in a six-year campaign, gave a warning to *Al-Hayat* yesterday that it will start attacking Kuwait targets abroad. The group, whose spiritual leader, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, is in jail in the United States for conspiring to blow up the World Trade Centre in New York.

US pleased by 72% hits

More than a quarter of the airstrikes launched from the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise* missed their main targets, naval commanders said yesterday. But US officials praised the 72 per cent rate as exceptionally good. (AP)

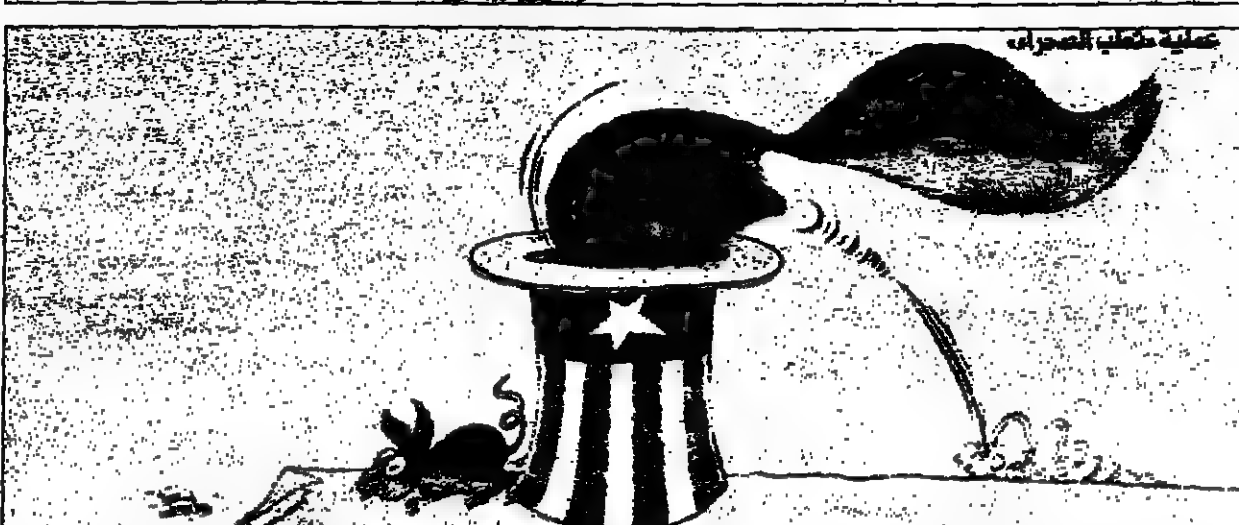
also threatened US targets yesterday. People in Bahrain's US Embassy were evacuated after a bomb threat, and in recent days the Americans have closed 40 embassies and missions overseas.

US intelligence agents are reported to have monitored a telephone conversation between the Saudi dissident, Osama bin Laden, in Afghanistan and a supporter in which he discusses an imminent bomb attack on a Western target. The Saudi millionaire is believed to have been responsible for the August bomb attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which more than 250 were killed.

One senior Western diplomat said last night: "Saddam will want his revenge and he is cunning. If he were to launch a missile on one of his neighbours, that would just invite immediate airstrikes."

"He does not have an effective terrorist organisation working abroad, but there are plenty of Islamic extremist groups who would happily do the job for him."

"It was noticeable that in his last television address Saddam did not make the expected extravagant boasts of revenge. He does not want his fingerprint left on any attack which could be blamed on



Cartoons by Melhim Emad ridiculing the US-British airstrikes on Iraq, published in the Lebanese *Al-Kifayah Al-Arabi* — one of many Middle Eastern newspapers to mock Operation Desert Fox as damaging US credibility in the region

known Islamic groups. He has the money to fund such an operation."

The mood in Kuwait yesterday was increasingly nervous, with leading politicians admitting they feel even more vulnerable since Operation Desert Fox was halted. Kuwait suf-

fered a bomb attack on the US Embassy in December 1983 in which seven people were killed. In May 1985 a suicide bomber rammed the Emir's motorcade, injuring the Kuwait ruler. Then, in 1993, intelligence services uncovered a plot to assassinate former Pres-

ident Bush during a visit to US troops at their Camp Doha base in Kuwait. One Kuwaiti official said: "We know the terrorist threat from Saddam and others. We have already planned additional security."

US troops were strengthen-

ing their desert positions on the border with Iraq. British pilots in Kuwait have yet to restart enforcing the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. Military commanders in the Gulf said that Iraqi missile batteries might mistake a surveillance flight for a raid.

He accused Britain and America of resorting to the "law of the jungle" and of lying to their own people and the world. "We shall never, never accept conditions set by Clinton or Blair," he said when asked if Iraq would allow back the United Nations weapons inspectors.

Mr Aziz spoke after President Saddam Hussein met his senior aides to weigh the diplomatic fallout from the attacks. Buoyed by calls from France and Russia for an overall review of the UN policy to Iraq, the state-run press suggested Baghdad would not allow weapons experts back unless sanctions were lifted and Richard Butler, the UN's chief inspector, was sacked. Baghdad believes the Australian diplomat is an "American spy" used by Washington to prolong sanctions.

More than 100 UN relief workers evacuated to Jordan on the eve of the four-day bombing campaign are due to return today.

Defiant Baghdad scorns effect of strikes

By MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

A DEFIANT Iraq claimed last night that 62 of its soldiers had been killed in the "criminal aggression" launched by Britain and America, but gave no figure for civilian casualties, which it said were much higher.

Just over half the "martyrs" were among the Special Republican Guards and the Republican Guards, Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, said. He told journalists in Baghdad that 180 more soldiers had been wounded, and poured scorn on the effectiveness of Operation Desert Fox. "What they really destroyed

IRAQ

were barracks and buildings of Iraq's most elite forces," he said. "These can, and will, be rebuilt."

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British firms on alert to stop dictator rebuilding deadly arsenal

By MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE EDITOR

TECHNOLOGY

THE intelligence services have stepped up their "counter-proliferation" war against Iraq to stop President Saddam Hussein's agents acquiring British equipment and technology for his programme to build weapons of mass destruction.

Priority is now being given by MI6 and MI5, as well as by Customs and relevant government departments, to combat the Iraqis whether four days of bombing by

the Americans and British, are expected to be on the lookout for replacement computers and other key components for their arms systems.

British companies involved in producing "dual-use" equipment that could have military application are already regularly visited by MI5 and warned to watch for foreign customers seeking products that appear on a list of sensitive items linked to nuclear, chemical or

biological weapons. The warnings from MI5's counter-proliferation team cover at least ten countries that are known to be developing weapons of mass destruction.

However, Iraq has now gone to the top of the priority list, because, with United Nations arms inspectors no longer in Baghdad, it is expected to be more difficult to monitor the arrival of new equipment.

Up to 800 British companies have been earmarked for special attention. "Most of the responses we're getting are positive, which is encour-

aging," a security source said. The list of sensitive items includes supercomputers, optical signal processing equipment, high-speed cameras, fibre optics, infra-red imagery, ceramics, navigation systems, pesticides, high-temperature materials, guidance sets and aerosol generators. Companies are given notice of the visits by MI5.

Universities around the country are also expected to alert the authorities, under a "voluntary vetting scheme", about any application by a foreign postgraduate student

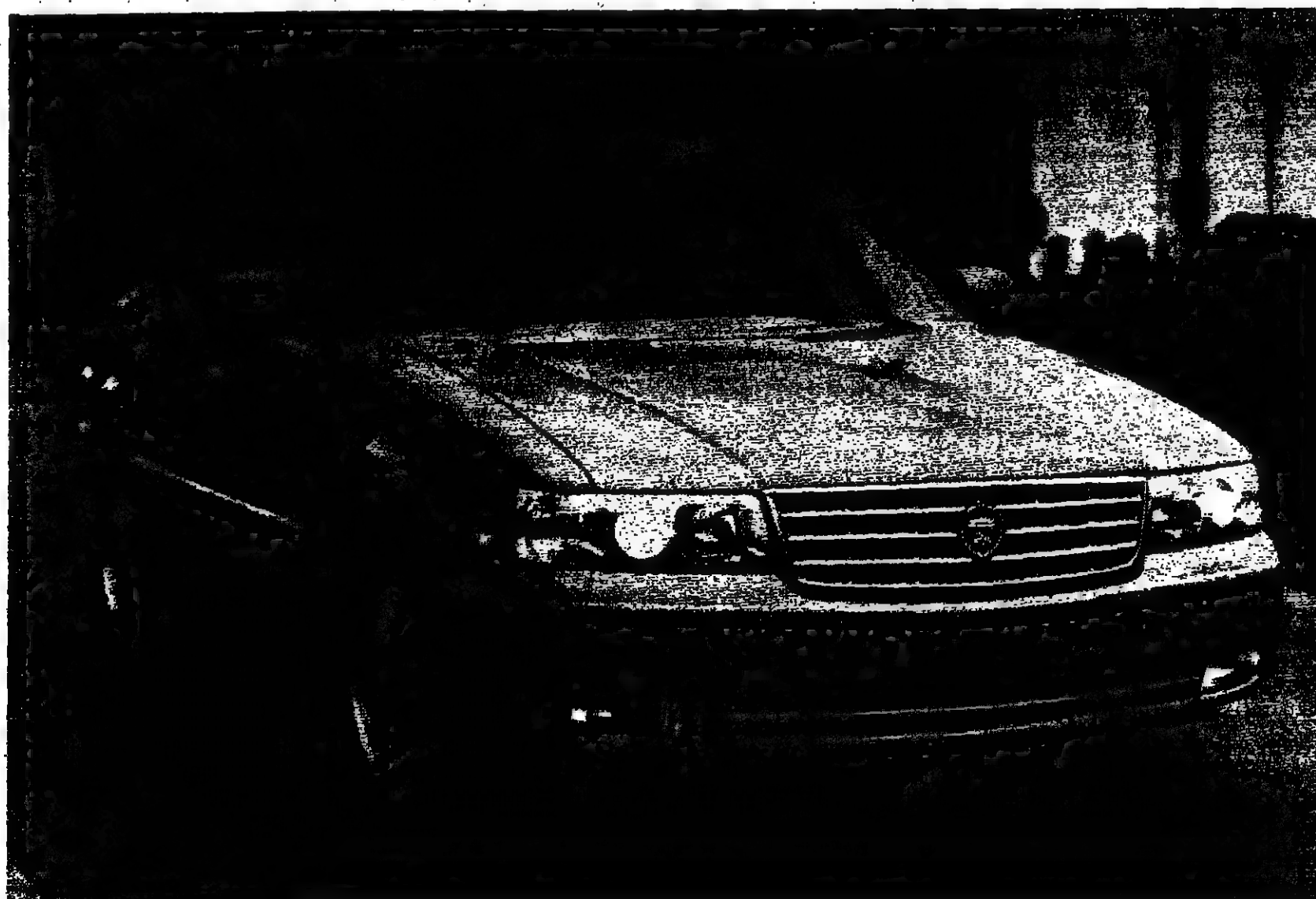
from one of the proliferating countries to do a course in subjects such as microbiology that could assist their governments in developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. MI6 and MI5 never forget that, in 1984, a female postgraduate student called Rihab Taha completed her PhD in biology at the University of East Anglia and went on to run Saddam's biological warfare programme. The intelligence services refer to her as "Dr Death".

One intelligence source said: "She learnt what she needed to

know about biological warfare here in England and she is still in charge of Saddam's programme in Baghdad and is the expert on anthrax."

Although there have been much tighter controls on Iraqi students since Saddam's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990 and the Gulf War of 1991, MI5 officers are now reminding universities to be aware of Iraqi students already involved in courses who might have been sent to Britain to train in subjects that could assist the dictator's covert arms programmes.

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Desperate Netanyahu heads for early election

AFTER a day of high political drama, Israel appeared last night to be heading for an early election after Benjamin Netanyahu's own right-wing Likud Party decided to switch its support behind the move.

Israel Radio said the ruling party's about-turn appeared to have tipped the voting balance in favour of legislation to bring the next poll forward from the scheduled date of late 2000. Late April or early May next year were given as the most likely dates.

Likud's about-turn heralds a new period of instability, writes Christopher Walker in Jerusalem

The move by Likud, which took power from Labour in 1996 with Mr Netanyahu becoming the country's first directly elected Prime Minister, heralded a new period of dangerous instability in the Middle East. The Government has made clear that in

sponse to reports of the "peace freeze" during the election campaign: "Desperation will lead to desperate acts. This is the last thing we need."

Mr Netanyahu had already secured support from his Cabinet to freeze the process pending Palestinian compliance with certain conditions; that idea was rejected yesterday by the Palestinian Authority.

The Prime Minister was heckled from Left and Right as he defended in the Knesset his move to suspend the peace

process, but his decision to support the early election initiative and detach it from a parliamentary no-confidence motion, was seen as a tacit admission that he could not secure majority support for it.

He had to break off as Dan Tichon, the Speaker, shouted above the chaos and ordered a brief adjournment. Downstairs a sticker posted up anonymously read "Come on, Sara, let's go home", a reference to the Prime Minister's wife.

Explaining Likud's about-turn on new elections, Silvan Shalom, the Science Minister and a staunch Netanyahu loyalist, said: "We are fed up with the kind of situation where we come to this building every morning and have to plan how to do everything to get a majority at the end of the day. These days are behind us. We are going to face a new election and we hope we will win."

Opposition from foes and friends has forced Mr Netanyahu into a political corner and spells the beginning of the

end for his fractious coalition of right-wing and religious politicians, which was left with an unstable 61-39 majority after various defections.

Israel Katz, an influential Likud backbencher, said that the party would vote in favour of early polls at one of the votes due in the Knesset last night. Yesterday was dubbed "super-Monday" because of the number of key decisions to be taken.

As tension in the Knesset rose, Mr Katz said: "The Lik-

ud faction voted and decided overwhelmingly, with the support of the Prime Minister, to vote in favour of the early election law."

The media were full of speculation about potential new alignments, with unconfirmed rumours that Mr Netanyahu may face a challenge from a new far-right grouping led by Benny Begin, the headline son of Menachem Begin, the former Likud Prime Minister. Mr Begin refused to confirm or deny the rumours.

Chinese activists get long prison terms

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

CHINESE courts, signalling that Beijing will stamp harshly on any possible challenge to its power, sentenced two leading human rights activists to long prison terms yesterday after trials lasting only a few hours, bringing protests from the United States and calling into question an apparent commitment by China's leaders to a more open system.

Xu Wen Li, 55, a veteran dissident who has already served a 13-year jail term for calling for democracy, denounced the Beijing court proceedings at which he was sentenced to a further 13 years in prison, calling it "political persecution". Xu said that his trial was illegal and refused to plead guilty or not guilty to subversion charges.

Another court, in the eastern city of Hengzhou, jailed Wang Youcai, like Xu a leading member of a new political grouping, the Chinese Democratic Party, which aims to challenge the Communist Party's monopoly on power, to 11 years in prison. His trial had taken place last Thursday, with that of Qin Yongmin, another activist, in the industrial city of Wuhan. Mr Qin is awaiting his verdict.

The official Xinhua news agency quoted court verdicts as saying that Xu and Wang had accepted money from "foreign hostile organisations". The Beijing verdict said: "Attempting to overthrow the state, Xu in November secretly planned the formation of the so-called Chinese Democratic Party. To organise, plan and implement the overthrow of state power, Xu also accepted financial assistance from foreign hostile organisations."

The US Embassy in Beijing criticised Xu's 13-year term. "We hope this deplorable decision by the Beijing Intermediate Court will not be allowed to stand," an embassy spokesman said. "We are deeply disappointed both with the guilty verdict and extremely harsh sentence given to Mr Xu."

The embassy said that nobody should be arrested, tried or sentenced for exercising internationally recognised freedoms, including those guaranteed in the United Nations international covenant on political rights, which China had signed last October.



Ibrahim al-Wahash, 23, who is hoping to become a teacher, with his family's flock on the hills around Bethlehem. Photograph: Paul Rogers

Shepherds see the light on jobs

Watching flocks by day is a dying art amid the lure of more profitable work. In the first of three articles from Bible towns, Christopher Walker looks at Bethlehem

THE number of shepherds who tend their flocks on the hills around Bethlehem has slumped dramatically since their predecessors were told of the birth of Jesus nearly 2,000 years ago.

Fast dwindling also is the number of young men willing to take up the ancient vocation in this often parched region. This year's water shortage is so severe that the shepherds, most of them Muslims, now start every morning when they take out their flocks with an impassioned prayer for rain.

But Munib Toukan, a former public relations wizard for Royal Jordanian Airlines who was headhunted by the World Bank to lead the Bethlehem 2000 Project, is determined that the shepherds' story will start the festivities in this mainly Muslim West Bank town. It is hoped that millennium celebrations will put Bethlehem once again at the centre of world attention.

With his millennium clock ticking relentlessly away in his office, Mr Toukan, also a Muslim, outlined his plan. He admits that, with no contracts yet signed and Bethlehem the scene of daily riots between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, the project is still at the dream stage.

The sweeping view from his window of the rocky pastures known as Shepherd's Field



Munib Toukan, head of the Bethlehem 2000 project, with the town's millennium logo

has inspired Mr Toukan. "The idea would be next Christmas Eve to kick-start the proceedings with the Three Tenors on a stage down there singing *Silent Night*," he said. A laser would then illuminate a "star" which would move until it was over the roof of the Church of the Nativity in Manger Square. "Everything would be televised," Mr Toukan said, with a variety of

international figures already invited to attend. The guest lists ranges from the Queen to President Yeltsin of Russia, who has agreed to head the honorary committee overseeing the whole event.

Mr Toukan exudes calm, even when his office still lacks proper flooring, when he is locked in dispute with Israel over a heavily armed roadblock through which all pil-

grims will have to pass, and Islamic militancy.

As street-fighting raged only a mile from his office, Mr Toukan handed out glossy folders about the project, boasting eventual financing of \$212 million (£132.5 million), and proclaiming: "Bethlehem will be the Star of the Millennium. Peoples and all faiths are invited to participate and share the celebra-

tions with the Palestinian people, and to make Bethlehem their place of annual pilgrimage thereafter."

Away from the dreams, the reality for Bethlehem's 20th-century shepherds is harsh. For Ibrahim al-Wahash, charged with overseeing the 120 sheep that make up his uncle's herd, work starts before dawn. In a good year he makes only a few thousand dollars from sheep's milk, cheese and the occasional lamb sold to butchers.

Such is the shortage of real shepherds around Bethlehem that local officials are charging foreign TV crews upwards of \$100 to find one who will agree to be filmed. Many who aspire to jobs in the self-rule Palestinian towns or in Israel find the whole idea of animal husbandry outdated and demeaning.

"Young men now want something more exciting in their lives, something that pays good money — even if that involves working for an Israeli," said Walid Salama, a teacher whose father is a retired shepherd.

Mr al-Wahash, 23, said: "I am hoping to be a teacher when I have got my qualifications. The family is behind me. They know shepherds here are a dying breed. Maybe in another ten years there will not be a single one left."

□ Next: Nazareth.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Satellite watch on German railways

BOON: Germany brought planes, helicopters and spy satellites into use to monitor its railways after three train mishaps, including a derailment, in the wake of blackmail threats against the rail company. The police said they were investigating whether the incidents were linked to threats to tamper with track unless DM10 million (£3.7 million) was handed over by the rail operator, Deutsche Bahn.

The Defence Ministry said air force Tornados would photograph 24,850 miles of track and at night would use infra-red cameras to check for signs of disturbance. Border guards were using helicopters to patrol the tracks. (Reuters)

Heads — it's the Pope

BRUSSELS: The Pope's head will be allowed on euro coins issued by the Vatican under a European Union scheme (Charles Bremner writes). It seeks to solve an argument with the Vatican, San Marino and Monaco — three micro-states outside the EU. The Vatican and San Marino have traditionally issued Italian lire coins with their own designs, and Monaco has used the French franc under an arrangement with Paris. The Commission proposal in effect admits the micro-states into the monetary union, provided they abide by all rules and let Italy and France supervise their coinage.

TV watcher attacked

JERUSALEM: Four ultra-orthodox Jews beat up a man, 79, and ransacked his home because he watched television on Saturday — the Jewish sabbath. Yitzhak Daniel Levy suffered broken legs and hands in the attack, which left the TV set, telephone and furniture damaged. It was the latest and most serious of incidents blamed on "modesty patrols" that have riven tensions between Orthodox and secular Jews here. Fires have also been started at the home of three Swiss Christian women suspected of trying to convert Jews, and the flat of a young man accused of abandoning his religion. (AFP)

Nato chief in Belgrade

BELGRADE: General Wesley Clark, right, the Nato commander, met Yugoslav military chiefs here amid reports that a Serbian policeman had been killed in Kosovo and the army had attacked ethnic Albanian guerrilla positions. The policeman was shot near Podujevo, Serbian and international sources said, and the Yugoslav Army attacked bunkers dug by separatist guerrillas north of the town. (Reuters)

'Colonel Passy' dies

PARIS: André Dewavrin, better known as "Colonel Passy", the wartime head of the London-based Free French secret service has died aged 87, friends said. A career army officer, he was 29-year-old captain when General Charles de Gaulle, creator of the Free French movement, entrusted him with creating the Central Bureau for Intelligence and Action in June 1944. The bureau had a big part in creating the Resistance and gathering intelligence for the allies in occupied France throughout the 1940-1944 occupation. (Reuters) (Obituaries, page 1)

Sole beneficiary plan

SEOUL: Chung Kyu Chil, 51, tired an acquaintance to cut off his feet so he could collect £1.1 million in insurance. The South Korean grocer told police he discovered the loss when waking early on December 11 after a drinking bout. Police suspect creditors, his family saying that he owed £151,500 in stock market and gambling losses, but then found he had insurance policies that paid £1 million if he became disabled accidentally. The acquaintance faces assault charges, but Mr Chung is free as he has not tried to collect the money. (AP)

'Impersonators' hit by Santa clause

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

SANTA CLAUS is persona non grata in the French capital this Christmas — where he faces police harassment and scorn from toddlers. France's punctilious bureaucracy is clamping down on anyone daring to dress up as Father Christmas, threatening fines of up to Fr1,200 (£127).

Under a bylaw banning "disguises on the public highway outside carnival periods", Santas can be sanctioned for simply stepping outdoors, although police said they were tolerated as long as they did not try to profit from the costume. But woe-

ride anyone trying to engage in traditional activities such as posing for tourist snapshots. Police are under orders to enforce a second bylaw that prohibits "the taking of photographs without permission" and carries a Fr900 to Fr1,200 penalty.

One officer said the presence with the photographer of "an impersonator" — a term used to describe suspects in a long red coat and white beard — was an aggravating factor likely to push the fine towards the top end of the scale.

Bruno, a Gallic Father Christmas interviewed by *Le Figaro* yesterday, said he charged Fr50 for a photograph and had

been fined at least once a week over the festive period.

He cannot even hope for sympathy from French youngsters. Department stores that traditionally employ a Santa have been refusing to renew contracts, bowing to customer pressure. One, La Samaritaine, said: "We realised last year that he did not have the same success anymore."

The Left Bank chic Bon Marché agreed, saying: "Too many Father Christmas-masks kill the spirit of Father Christmas."

Anyway, today's children are "too materialist" to believe in him, according to La Samaritaine.



Padre Pio: healing attributed to him

Pope to beatify stigmata priest

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE beatification of Padre Pio was decided by the Pope yesterday after the Roman Catholic Church ruled that the miraculous healing of a young woman attributed to the southern Italian mystic was authentic.

The Vatican said that the beatification, the last stage towards becoming a saint, would take place in Rome on May 2. The Pope approved a

decree recognising the recovery of Consiglia De Martino, a supermarket worker from near Salerno, had taken place solely through the intercession of the Capuchin priest, who died in 1968.

Bells were rung and fireworks set off at Padre Pio's birthplace at Pietrelcina in the southern province of Benevento in celebration of the news.

Padre Pio began attracting devoted followers after he de-

veloped, at 31, stigmata — bleeding wounds — on his hands, feet and thighs that were considered to be like the wounds of the crucified Christ.

Signora De Martino, now 46, says that the appeal successfully to Padre Pio for help in November 1995 while awaiting surgery for a life-threatening lymph gland disorder. "He came to me in a dream, he touched me on the neck and the chest and said, 'You don't need an operation any more'."

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Ex-Presidents beg Senate to heal nation

THE former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter weighed in to the impeachment debate yesterday with a blueprint for "healing the nation" through a swift bipartisan end to the crisis.

The two respected elder statesmen, from opposite ends of the political spectrum, proposed that the Senate should move quickly to censure Mr Clinton and spare the country a trial. Mr Clinton would have to accept a rebuke and acknowledge he lied under oath.

It was suggested that the resolution should stipulate that an admission of lying could not then be used against him in a criminal trial for perjury. The initiative by the two former Presidents, outlined in an article in *The New York Times*, adds momentum to attempts by other senior political figures to find a cross-party solution to a saga that the public dearly wants to forget.

Mr Ford, the conservative Republican who pardoned Richard Nixon, and Mr Carter, the liberal Democrat who granted an amnesty for those who avoided the Vietnam call-up, were lost in the 1976 presidential election from which Mr Carter emerged victorious.

Ford and Carter want to spare Clinton a trial, writes Damian Whitworth

They referred to their decisions about Nixon and Vietnam as attempts to heal national divisions and implored the Senate to act in a similar way. "In the wake of President Clinton's impeachment by the House of Representatives, America once again suffers from a grievous and deepening wound. Our people are angrily divided," they said.

With few people convinced that the requisite two-thirds of the 100-member Senate would vote to convict Mr Clinton on the two articles of impeachment passed amid great rancour by the House of Representatives, the two former Presidents argued that a trial should be avoided.

"It seems inevitable that by rehearsing the lurid evidence of President Clinton's misconduct, we will only exacerbate

the jagged divisions that are tearing at our national fabric," they said. "Make no mistake, the judgment of history does matter. It matters profoundly. And impeachment by the full House has already brought profound disgrace to President Clinton. Whatever happens now will do little to affect history's judgment of him."

The sticking point in the deal is still likely to be eliciting an admission from Mr Clinton that he lied. "The notion that he's going to come forward and say he's lied is not going to happen. He's not going to concede he lied to the Grand Jury, because he did not," Gregory Craig, one of the President's lawyers, said.

Mr Craig said Mr Clinton's legal team was preparing for a trial that is expected to open shortly after January 6 when the new Senate convenes. The White House was reported yesterday to be considering a legal fight to make the new House of Representatives, which will contain more Democrats, vote on impeachment.

Mr Clinton's spokesman would say only that the lawyers are reviewing all their options. Certainly, discussions are being held with key members of the Senate about reaching a bipartisan compromise, something Orrin Hatch, the Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and others have already suggested is possible.

George Mitchell, the former Senate majority leader and chairman of the Northern Ireland peace process, has been advising the President how to work towards an agreement.

A censure would allow Mr Clinton to keep his job: after he was impeached he said that he had no intention of relinquishing it. Nor do Americans want him to. A poll for *USA Today* and *CNN* indicated that after impeachment his approval rating has climbed to 73 per cent, his highest yet.



President and Hillary Clinton, accompanied by Dan Glickman, left, the US Agriculture Secretary, arrive at an emergency shelter in Washington yesterday where they volunteered to prepare food for the homeless. In the aftermath of the congressional impeachment proceedings, Mr Clinton will also spend the run-up to Christmas reading to children and paying homage to the victims of the 1988 Pan Am Lockerbie plane bombing

Fury as friend of Bill says critic should be stoned



Kal's view in the *Baltimore Sun* of President Clinton's determination to stay in office

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

HOLLYWOOD'S top lobbyist in Washington has chastised Alec Baldwin, the Hollywood actor, for suggesting that Henry Hyde — chairman of the House Judiciary Committee which voted to impeach President Clinton — and his family should be stoned to death.

The actor's publicist protested that the comment about Mr Hyde was meant in jest. But Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, said friends of his on both sides of Congress had complained to him about Mr Baldwin's comments on NBC's *Late Night* with Conan O'Brien. During a guest appearance, Mr Baldwin, who is married to Kim Basinger, said that in other countries Mr Hyde and his family would be stoned to death.

Mr Valenti said the comment was too incendiary to be parody and "so off-base and over the top as to boggle the mind". Mr Valenti's role is to keep relations smooth between Congress and the film and television industry, although he did not write to Mr Baldwin on behalf of his association but as a friend, he said. He admitted he had not seen the skit.

Mr Baldwin and his wife

are among a Hollywood set close to Mr Clinton. They were host to the President and Hillary Clinton for a lavish fundraiser at their home in the Hamptons on Long Island during the summer.

Mr Hyde is one of four Congressional Republicans who have recently admitted illicit sex. They include Indiana's Dan Burton, who admitted to fathering a child out of wedlock.

Hours before the House of Representatives voted to impeach Mr Clinton on two of four articles against him, the incoming Republican Speaker, Bob Livingston of Louisiana, resigned and urged the President to do the same.



Carter, left, and Ford are insisting that Clinton must acknowledge that he lied under oath

Republicans count the costs of pursuing a popular leader

REPUBLICANS who congratulated themselves for impeaching President Clinton may soon be wondering if their victory was too costly.

New polls show that their support for impeaching in a public backlash over their insistence on sending Mr Clinton to trial in the Senate and refusing to accept a vote of censure as an alternative.

Yesterday the party received another dose of bad news. David Duke, a Republican and former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, announced that he would run for the congressional seat be-

Public backlash turns Congress triumph into disaster, writes Ian Brodie in Washington

ing vacated by Bob Livingston, the Speaker-elect who resigned on Saturday after being forced to disclose extramarital affairs.

Republicans moved swiftly to distance themselves from Mr Duke, who has proved an embarrassment before. Jim Nicholson, the Republican National Chairman, said: "There is no room in the party of Lincoln for a Klansman like David

Duke." Although Mr Duke is denounced as a neo-Nazi by his foes, he attracted a surprising number of white votes when he ran in 1990 for the Senate and the following year for the governorship of Louisiana.

Nationally, according to polls, fewer than one in three voters now has a favourable view of the Republican Party, its lowest rating for six years. In just the last week, the

numbers have slumped from 49 to 39 per cent among men and from 38 per cent to 24 per cent among women in polls conducted for *CNN* and *USA Today*.

At the same time, President Clinton has soared to a record 73 per cent approval rating. Other polls showed similarly gloomy results for Republicans. Many Republicans in Congress fear that their show of unity during last Saturday's impeachment vote was their finest hour. But many Republicans outside Washington disagree. George Bush Jr, the Governor

of Texas and the leading Republican presidential contender for 2000, has said nothing of late in support of impeachment. Republican governors elsewhere have been equally muted.

Congressional Republicans are hoping that their zealotry in going after President Clinton will be forgotten and their standing restored before the next election in two years. It is a gamble that they could lose if the Senate trial becomes a drawn-out affair that hobbles all other legislation. Collaboration between Re-

publicans and Mr Clinton on the passage of healthcare, taxation and other issues seems increasingly unlikely. "I don't see how you can meet the President in the morning to ask for his co-operation, then impeach him in the afternoon," said Charles Rangel, a Democrat in Congress.

In pursuing impeachment, Republicans ignored a warning sign in the November election when Democrats gained five House seats, reducing the Republican majority from 11 to six and prompting the resignation of Newt Gingrich as Speaker. After the election, Ralph Reed, a Republican consultant, warned party leaders in a memorandum that preoccupation with felling a popular president was a "strategic blindness" which was hurting their interests.

Conservative Republicans are still insisting that their refusal to be guided by opinion polls is to their credit. Whitman Ayres, a Republican pollster, is unconvinced. "Generally, there is not much to be gained politically by driving an issue that's only supported by one third of the electorate," he said.

Peru 'in drive to sterilise the poor'

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

A HUMAN rights group in Peru has accused President Fujimori's Government of conducting forced sterilisations on more than 250,000 women in poor Andean villages and city shanty towns.

Testimony by thousands of women — given during an investigation by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights — led to allegations of a systematic forced sterilisation programme. Its report, to be published in February, says that for three years operations have been carried out "under threat and coercion". It indicates that the Government set itself the task of reducing families to 2.5 children a couple by 2000. To achieve that, it targeted poor illiterate Quechua and Aymara women, who traditionally have more than five children.

Peru has a population of 24 million, including more than six million women of fertile age, and more than half live in poverty. The investigation began in 1996 after Gutilla Tamayo, a women's rights activist and lawyer, found documents outlining a Health and Family Programme (1996-2000) when inspecting a Piura district clinic.

Hoodlums can boost firepower on Internet

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

THE home page dribbles into view trying hard to be festive. First a tree appears, then decorations, then the message: "Taurus is pleased to join in the holiday spirit. With the purchase of any new Taurus handgun you receive a gift from us. Don't miss out!"

Time may already be short, but Christmas shopping for one's friends in the underworld has never been so easy. From sniper's rifles to knives, hunting crossbows to electric stun guns, the gift for the hoodlum who has everything is now available in cyberspace.

In half an hour on the Internet this week I could have equipped a small invasion force. Even for novice arms dealers, high-powered Mark 1 Neutralizer rifles at \$4,200 (£2,625) each, and accurate in the right hands to a thousand yards "to get the job done right first time", were but a few clicks away with your favourite browser.

M16 assault rifles, tried and tested by the US Army, are available direct from the manufacturer, thanks to a helpful online order form. Likewise handguns, night sights, specialised ammunition and, with a little perseverance, most material from the disused Soviet war machine: up to and including fighter planes.

There is a hitch. Most American dealers and manufacturers will send lethal weapons only to other dealers, from whom they have requested a Federal Firearms Licence. Number on their electronic order forms. This month the FBI



A metal crossbow and powerful Neutralizer gun, two of the deadly weapons for sale on the Internet

also introduced a long-awaited "Instacheck" system to check gun buyers' backgrounds against an exhaustive database of known felons, from gang members and white-baiters to paid assassins.

The system, condemned by the gun lobby as an unwarranted addition to existing laws, crashed on its first day. "It was a disaster," said Ron Kesselring, a major Seattle-area dealer. It has since run more smoothly, vetting virtual as well as face-to-face arms sales across the country.

In the gun trade, as in online pornography, however, the Internet remains America's murkiest area for jurisdiction. "If you buy a gun on the Internet you have to go through a licensed dealer — if you're abiding by the law," said Will Winton, an Internet

specialist at Handgun Control, the pressure group set up by Sarah Brady of the Brady Assault Weapons Bill. "But there's a huge loophole."

Like the Brady Bill, the Instacheck system makes an exception of guns sales between so-called "private collectors". Such sales remain largely unregulated, with the Internet linking bona fide collectors and unscrupulous dealers as never before. The result: "People are getting away with selling lots of guns, no questions asked," Mr Winton said.

Online shopping could be worth more than \$100 billion a year by 2002, *Newsweek* estimated in a recent cover story headlined: *Xmas.com*. If so, most of the money will change hands in squeaky-clean cyber-mails run by bright young billionaires.

Moscow threat on embassy security

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S Interior Ministry has threatened to remove its security guards from outside the US Embassy in Moscow in protest at the US State Department's withdrawal of police guards from the Russian Embassy in Washington DC.

Ironically, it is the Americans who are pleading financial difficulties during Russia's worst economic crisis since the end of communism.

In the 1960s the Soviet Embassy in Washington was regularly vandalised by opponents of the regime and was often the centre of anti-communist demonstrations. In Russia the US Embassy fared little better, with taxi-drivers breaking through its gates and Jewish refuseniks trying to storm its compound to reach safety. More recently a grenade was thrown through a window, although nobody was injured.

The newspaper *Novye Izvestia* reported that James Collins, the US Ambassador to Moscow, has asked the Interior Ministry to reconsider and increase rather than decrease the level of security around his embassy. He expressed the hope that the Russians in Washington would come to a mutually satisfactory agreement with the authorities.

Yuri Vorontsov, the Russian Ambassador to Washington, was recalled to Moscow last week "for consultations" as part of Russia's stand against the joint US-British bombing of Iraq.

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The lost art of hosting a good party

Giving a party to enjoy yourself misses the point. The object is to please friends, says Ewa Lewis

How many Christmas parties in the past two weeks have you actually enjoyed? Were there any at which you were warmly welcomed by your host and introduced to some interesting people? Or have you been left helplessly seeking a familiar face?

In the past ten years I have observed the best years of party life as well as the dull years and have often felt a keen sense of loss and a yearning for the prewar style and manners of entertaining, which my generation only occasionally catches a glimpse of.

What I am more likely to see today is a guest left kicking his heels in a corner, or the unfortunate floundering amid a barrage of shop-talk. While one embraces the cosy comfort of the informally structured "supper in the kitchen, wear what you like" there is still the wistful desire to feel cosseted.

The great prewar hostesses like Sybil Colefax and Nancy Cunard would have gracefully sidestepped any pitfalls. The art of conversation was all, so that no one should be left out, and the hostesses would monitor who should speak to whom before dinner, ensuring that dining companions didn't run out of conversation. She would also indicate to which side the diner should talk. Some even made notes beforehand in order to steer conversation on to general topics.

There are still great hostesses

today, but in superior numbers are those who give a party to enjoy themselves, which misses the point. The object is to please your friends.

To receive guests is to be ritually bound to them for the evening. The host is giving, the guests receiving and are at the host's mercy as to how he will treat them, all of which creates a psychological imbalance which the guest can even out by singing for his supper.

Whatever the situation, it is up to the host to welcome his guest as if it were the greatest honour. Each one should feel remembered and exceptional, as if they were the very person their host most wanted.

This, however, becomes more complicated with the postwar vogue for the big cocktail party, to some a fate worse than death. Elsa Maxwell felt that it was "easily the worst invention since castor oil". For those in the nodding and smiling business, it has become a simple way of repaying debts to those whom you don't wish to invite to dinner. Squashed up like piglets in a litter, shouting at forte pitch and grasping the odd sally of wit over the din, there must be something to recommend it, else why would so many otherwise sane people keep up the tradition?

Nicholas Coleridge, managing director of Conde Nast, is in favour "if they serve cocktails". A charming gladiator on these occasions, he manages to work the room with the

speed of a comet. Short conversations with many people, especially the hostess, he feels will make sufficient impact. I have learnt much from him and am able to go to two or three cocktail parties in an evening and still be home in time for *The Bill*.

The killer for this strategy is the overzealous hostess whose single aim appears not to let anyone be happy. As soon as two people start enjoying their conversation, along she comes with Mr Boring. Countess Alexander believes in introducing people to each other but thinks "it is important to interpret your guests' wishes and read whether they wish to be introduced or moved". Braille would probably be the answer. Then you could feel their muscle tension and have

some fun yourself, too. But she has hit the nail on the head. Thoughtfulness about what others would like is the centrepiece of the good hostess puzzle. When Napoleon arrived to visit the King of Saxony, he found a party in progress. The King took him aside and showed him to an ante-room with a chamber pot. "I've often found," he said, "that even great men sometimes need to be alone."

You don't have to give many parties to be a good hostess. A good occasion remains in the memory for a long time. Lady Hindlip says: "You are usually

To receive guests is to be ritually bound to them

good at doing what you like doing." It is true that those who dislike social life are unlikely to give a good party. The hostess must give the impression of being carefree and enjoying the occasion.

The good hostess will tell her guests what to wear, for even though good company is more important than being dressed correctly, it still makes people feel more secure. The most exceptional thoughtfulness was observed when one gentleman of high quality welcomed a guest and found that he was wearing casual clothes while every-

one else was in black tie. Quietly the host slipped away and returned dressed in his casuals. Although parties do display the fruits of hard work and success, they are not supposed to be a boast of riches. This isn't to suggest that you shouldn't spoil your guests. If you can afford to give a Babylonian orgy in a two-tiered marquee with fireworks to music, it will be an occasion. Nero had ceilings of ivory panels that would shower guests with flowers or sprinkle exotic scent on them. Jools Holland simply strews his table with rose petals.

In other words give the best you can. There is a difference between being mean and being strapped. No one minds the latter but despises the former. I'm often asked what makes a good party that flows

easily for its hostess and in truth sometimes I don't know. The single, most vital, element is probably the hostess's guest list. A party which she gives to demand attention or use as an enhancement of status by getting the "right" people may not be the most enjoyable.

A good hostess will see her party as a celebration of relationships among the guests and an expression of sympathy and consensus on basic principles of the group.

A kindred spirit is essential for each person. The good hostess will invite those who will want to please the others or learn something from them. Coleridge says his dream hostess is one who introduces him to someone he had always

wanted to meet and then to find he would like to see them again. "It rarely happens," he says.

Numbers are always open to debate. Disraeli thought that "no more than the muses" was ideal. Another hostess makes a point of weighing up personalities and works to the formula of "three shouters to five listeners".

Finally, bear in mind that in Ancient Greece the biggest insult a hostess could bestow was to murder her guest, while the villagers of the Caucasus think that whoever comes into your house should be treated with great hospitality — but the minute he leaves you can slit his throat.

● Ewa Lewis is the social editor of *Tatler*



A glass without class: despite the good cheer, today one is more likely to see a guest left kicking his heels in a corner, or the unfortunate floundering amid a barrage of shop-talk

Jingle Bells, maestro?

Long evenings, a captive audience of relatives to impress, dozens of carols and Christmas hymns to choose from. No better season for a pianist to shine. I reasoned — if only someone could teach me to play.

I had been fingering the keys for five minutes when Richard Meyrick gently shoed me aside. "Let me show you how it can sound," he smiled. With a swish of his jacket tails — a mariner honed over years of practice — he took his place at the grand piano and launched into the most magical solo I had ever heard.

For a minute or two, the small Central London studio hemmed in by Sixties council blocks became the Wigmore Hall, and the bust of Apollo, the god of music, that stood in the corner appeared to smile. Then, after a few minutes of musical bliss, it was back to reality with me, a novice, trying to hammer out *Jingle Bells* with one finger.

Amazingly, Richard, an international concert pianist for 25 years, has chosen to initiate ignoramuses such as myself into the joys of the piano, offering "Learn a Christmas Carol" gift packages. His change in di-

rection was forged seven years ago, when — at the age of 39 — he had thyroid cancer diagnosed. It threatened to end his professional playing career, which started at 16 when he won a scholarship to the Royal



Keyboard skills are a great social asset at Christmas time

College of Music. "I was having radiotherapy every six months for three or four years," says Richard, now 46. "My fingers stiffened up and I couldn't play the piano."

He was given the all-clear three years ago but making a comeback to the world stage proved difficult. "I had done five big recitals at the Queen Elizabeth Hall but was unable to capitalise on that exposure because of the illness," he reflects. "I began to get more involved on the teaching side."

Now he divides his time between Gravesend, where he and his wife Felicity, a former violinist, run a teaching practice, and London. On a typical day he rises at 7am, practises for three hours, then hops on his motorbike for the 40-minute journey to a studio lent by the Golden Lane Estate, near the Barbican. On arrival he swaps his motorcycle gear for a suit and welcomes judges, solicitors and merchant bankers for lunchtime tuition. At 3pm he packs his suit into the piano, whizzes back to Gravesend and teach-

es until 8.30pm. "I know I'm a workaholic," he says, "but because of the illness, I don't want to waste a minute."

It takes only one lesson to appreciate why he is in demand. By the time my first hour is up, I can read the rudiments of sheet music and have mastered a one-hand version of *Jingle Bells*. He has improved my sense of timing with some clapping sessions, and encouraged me to hit the keys with gusto instead of embarrassment.

There is a little of the schoolmaster in him, too — I didn't dare come to the second lesson without having practised on my own modest piano, inherited in a house move.

During the second lesson we played a duet of *O Come All Ye Faithful*. I shall never forget it. And once I could play a little, I began to understand the lure of it all — how nothing matters except the notes you are playing at that moment, the undivided attention you must pay to every key, the sheer joy of getting the notes right and hearing music of your own making. No wonder that City folk, from absolute beginners to those whose efforts would not sound out of place in a concert hall, flock to this musical haven.

"People love it," Richard says. "It's a way for them to be creative, totally absorbed. And it is so different from their normal environment that it is relaxing." In fact, several of his students are so gifted that Richard has asked them to play in a charity concert in the City next year.

Just two lessons and his effusive encouragement have changed my life. I no longer regard the ancient wooden box in my living room as an enemy. My amateur, jangly carols are the best Christmas presents I could have given to my mother, who always wanted me to learn the piano. I will never make Apollo smile, but I will certainly bring an added sparkle to my family's Christmas celebrations this year.

I no longer regard my ancient piano as an enemy

● An initial one-hour consultation with Richard Meyrick is £60. Details: 0800-731 5453

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PEOPLE OF THE CENTURY

Christmas reflections on some unexpected movers and shakers

History has never been made solely by "the captains and the kings". They always strode a crowded stage. Great 20th-century historians, Edward Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, Simon Schama's distillation of 16th-century

Holland, John Hale's survey of the European Renaissance or Richard Cobb's worm's-eye view of the French Revolution, celebrate that truth. This century has certainly been rich in public figures as great, or terrible, as any: in one scale there are Roosevelt, Churchill, Gandhi, Gorbachev, in the other, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao. Two powerfully destructive ideologies, fascism and communism, have risen and returned to dust; socialism has had its apogee and transformation.

Yet conversely, this has been the people's century, a time when the political drama has filled out with actors who once had only walk-on parts. The protean Establishment has been reshaped by its critics, as networks of people and institutions have come to include quangos, tribunals, unions or lions of popular culture. Authority has been challenged, by a vigorous sense of personal liberty, to justify its conventions as well as its laws both nationally and, under the banner of human rights, worldwide. Leisure is no longer associated with privilege, thanks to higher wages, cheap travel and labour-saving gadgets. Dress codes now are more a street language than a social definition.

In this age of individualism, it is to some of the individuals who in each decade have rung the changes in our minds that we turn our Christmas thoughts. Few of them belong in history's roll-call of the obvious. For the 1900s, we have chosen the 2nd Lord Escher, the democratic courier who spanned the Victorian and Edwardian reigns and who, as Edward VII's close adviser, steered that somewhat erratic monarch through the post-1906 constitu-

tional upheavals. In the decade of the Great War, we look at Emmeline Pankhurst, figurehead of female emancipation, though in truth women won the vote more out of respect for their war work than

because of her famous stunt chained to railings. We fit through the Roaring Twenties, via Bloomsbury into the Long Barn and Sissinghurst gardens of Vita Sackville-West, flapper, writer, lesbian extraordinary but most durably an inspiration to the thousands of green fingers who have made garden centres 20th-century social institutions.

Who now remembers Mr Smoot? We do; and we profile the obscure American senator who in the 1930s gave the world the Great Depression. Equally influential and almost as forgotten is Werner von Braun, the German nuclear boffin who became midwife to the nuclear age. Then, as we survey the ending of wartime austerity in this country, the flavour of the Fifties is literally captured by Elizabeth David. In the Sixties, there was the Pill, flower power and Vietnam; but there was also a sound

electric guitar. After flower power, flower tinders: the ideas planted by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* germinated in the 1970s into the environmental movement. In the 1980s, we could have made stones talk as the Berlin Wall fell. Instead we listen to the canary in the Soviet cage; the courageous voice of another nuclear scientist, Andrei Sakharov, heralded the Cold War's end. We close the century that began with political revolutionaries with very different mould-breaker — Jerry Yang, whose Yahoo! search engine on the Internet opens up personal choices and discoveries that in the next century could make the horizons of the 20th seem oddly restricted. Ours is a metaphorical website. Others will have different icons of hidden history. Let each reader's search begin.

DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE

Britain will have to work hard to regain the initiative.

War may be a martial continuation of diplomacy, but after the airstrikes on Iraq, Britain needs to put its diplomacy on a war footing. The Government has insisted that the British and American strikes achieved their aim: the degradation of Saddam's military assets and the weakening of the pillars of his regime. It also maintains that there is widespread support abroad for the military action and the timing. If so, the Government needs to call on its allies to speak out more forcefully to convince their wavering public opinion. And Robin Cook now faces a huge postwar challenge: the building of a new diplomatic consensus on containing Saddam.

However much the missiles have set back Saddam's military capacity, in the short term they have also inflicted damage on Britain's diplomatic standing. Moscow has withdrawn its Ambassador from London. The Muslim world is in uproar. European allies are grumbling that they were not properly informed. And President Milosevic of Yugoslavia is meanwhile absorbing the lessons of Saddam's self-proclaimed propaganda victory.

Much of this was anticipated. Britain knew that there would be little overt backing, even in the Gulf, for its actions. Street demonstrations can leave Britain looking isolated; much more important is the private assurance from Arab leaders that Saddam had only himself to blame, and that they welcome any action to reduce his regional threat. Moscow has felt frustrated as much by Saddam as by its inability to protect him in the Security Council. Even as Yuri Fokine was leaving London in response to President Yeltsin's

outburst, Russian officials were signalling that this did not mean a breakdown in co-operation elsewhere and that they were ready to join a postwar consensus. And while some believe that Mr Milosevic may feel emboldened to thumb his nose at the West in Kosovo, others argue that he will now be less willing to risk his military assets to Western strikes.

Defining the means to enforce containment will not be easy. It will be harder still to ensure that the diplomatic initiative does not slip elsewhere. Already there is a mood within the United Nations to dump Richard Butler, head of the weapons inspection team. With siren hints from Baghdad that inspectors could return provided he is not among them, British and American determination not to allow Saddam to dictate terms will be severely strained. France, whose equivocation during the war says little for the vaunted closer defence co-operation outlined in St Malo, is seeking political — and trade — profit in the Arab world. Already President Chirac has called for a comprehensive review of sanctions, a step that could fatally undermine the eight-year unanimity on maintaining the embargo.

Mr Cook insists that British resolution is widely admired abroad. He is right. Commentators and public figures — from Danish columnists to Franco Zeffirelli — contrast this with their own governments' supine stance. What he must now do is to build on the new situation with steps that logically follow, rather than undermine, the airstrikes. Regaining the diplomatic initiative will be hard. But it would be his making as Foreign Secretary.

FARE'S FARE

Passengers deserve a better menu

Crossing the Channel on a ferry, you begin to feel hungry. You face a stark choice: an unappetising restaurant, or leaving your stomach to rumble until you reach land. Anyone who has been unfortunate enough to suffer this predicament will welcome P&O's decision to enlist the culinary skills of Richard Shepherd, one of London's most successful restaurateurs, to raise the standard of its ships' cuisine. But will he be able to make a difference and tickle passengers' taste buds?

There is a tradition, seemingly peculiar to Britain, that good food and travel do not mix. Despite the efforts of the cream of Britain's chefs — such as Clement Freud, Prue Leith and Raymond Blanc — travellers are still best advised not to travel by rail or ship until they have eaten. Yet rail or ship until they have eaten. Yet anyone who has been on an Austrian train, stopped in a café on an Italian autostrada, will wonder why British travellers are deprived of the gourmet delights that other European countries

enjoy. Is it an incurable symptom of the British disease that most trains cannot offer passengers freshly made sandwiches and cappuccinos? Why is edible fast food available in most of Britain's high streets, but not on a high-speed InterCity bound for London?

While meals on trains and ships have remained stuck in the gourmet doldrums, food on most airlines has improved dramatically. The treat of being given a choice of menus and wine is no longer a privilege reserved for first-class travellers. Even those squashed into economy class at the back of the plane can often choose what to eat and are piled with drinks. If this can be served from a tiny galley in an aircraft, why should not rail and sea passengers be offered even better meals? A ship or train full of passengers is a captive, hungry market, easily tempted by delicious snacks and meals. P&O has realised there is an appetite for good food on the high seas. Proof of its success will, of course, be in the pudding.

Pension reforms open to abuse

From Mr Patrick Carroll

Sir, There is a strange resemblance between the government proposals for pensions set out in the Green Paper, *Partnership in Pensions* (report, December 16), and the mistakes that initiated pension mis-selling ten years ago.

In 1988, there was a surplus in the national insurance fund that could have been used to improve benefits. Instead, an incentive was made available to encourage take-up of what were then called "appropriate personal pensions". This set in motion the large scale mis-selling of personal pensions that is still uncorrected.

The Prime Minister's "new insurance contract for pensions" will provide incentives to "take up what are now called "stakeholder pensions". Once again selling of pensions will be made easier. Unsuspecting people will again be told "the Government is giving money away — sign here".

But this time those earning more than £9,000 a year will be unable to opt in to the state system because the new second state pension, which will replace the state earnings-related pension, will be a restricted flat-rate scheme.

Besides the more limited choice inherent in the new regime there is also more potential for investment failure. The stock-market equity indices are standing at a high level now. The investment of new stakeholder funds in ordinary shares at present levels could turn out to be quite a disappointment in future years. At least in 1988 the stock market was at a low level, and investment failure has not compounded the troubles of those who were mis-sold pensions (at least not yet).

Though the new state scheme is announced as an insurance contract it will incorporate means-testing for all except the basic state pension, which will continue to lose its value. It is to be hoped the Government will reconsider such a degradation of British social security.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK CARROLL
(Director of Research),
Pension and Population
Research Institute,
35 Canonbury Road, N1 2DG.
December 17.

From Mr Jan Manning

Sir, In considering the proposed "stakeholder" pensions the Government should ensure not only that the levels of charges are compulsorily constrained, but also that no pension provider in any way involved in mis-selling in the past is allowed to participate in the new structures.

It is bad enough that those companies and brokers which attempted to profit from mis-selling are still allowed to advertise for and take on new business whilst their old customers' complaints are not satisfactorily dealt with. It would add insult to injury if these same organisations were allowed to benefit from the new structure — having proved themselves unfit under the old.

I write as one who has waited eight years for one of the largest and best known companies to resolve a problem.

Yours sincerely,
JAN MANNING,
Lakeland Thatch,
Monkmead Lane, West Chiddingfold,
West Sussex RH20 2PG.
December 16.

White House makeover

From Mr David Suski

Sir, The American Army was not "disgracefully defeated" during the War of 1812, as Mr Mark Corby alleges (letter, December 11). Although it lost the Battle of Bladensburg on August 24, 1814, it won the far more important Battle of Baltimore three weeks later. Indeed, the failed British effort to take Baltimore City and Fort McHenry gave rise to our national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Perhaps a better example of a "disgraceful defeat" would be the Battle of New Orleans (January 8, 1815), where it was the British Army, not the American, that was soundly defeated.

In the end, although "General Ross and his gallant lads" succeeded in their attack on an undefended Washington, neither they nor their torches could besmirch the White House. Indeed, only the President himself can do that, as we are seeing for the second time in our brief history.

Yours truly,
DAVID SUSKI,
1401 N. Taft Street,
Arlington, Virginia 22201.
dass@aol.com
December 11.

From Mr Adrian Room

Sir, Contrary to Mr Corby's statement, the White House was already known as such by 1809, before the British invasion of 1814.

The name came from its white-grey sandstone, which contrasted strikingly with the red brick of neighbouring buildings. Its official designation from 1818 to 1902 was the Executive Mansion, but in the latter year President Theodore Roosevelt adopted White House as the building's official name.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN ROOM,
12 High Street, St Martin's,
Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 2LF.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Animal tests for human welfare

From Mr Robin Beare, FRCS

Sir, Mr Cedric Hayes, JP, is apparently "moved to rage and tears at the cruelties inflicted on laboratory animals" (letter, December 14).

Were he to make objective inquiries, he would learn that the vast majority of these animals, essential to the safe development of each and every modern drug, are scrupulously cared for by their keepers, just as a good husbandman cares for his stock and a skilled craftsman for his tools. (Very unlike some of the long-distance sheep and cattle-hauliers, to whom the welfare of their passengers appears to be of little consequence.)

I am surprised that Mr Hayes — a member, however minor, of the judiciary — should regard Barry Horne, a convicted firebomber, as a "hero".

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN BEARE,
Scrags Farm, Cowden,
Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7EB.
December 16.

From Mr Spike Milligan

Sir, A human being who becomes sick should allow himself or herself to progress with dignity, whether in life or in death. Animals get diseases and die from them; we too should take our chance in the world — that's how life is. To interfere with that process and to use animals for the benefit of man is immoral.

My wife died from cancer, having refused to use any known medicines that had been used in animal experimentation. It wasn't easy for her, but she died with a clear conscience.

Sir sincerely,
SPIKE MILLIGAN,
c/o Spike Milligan Productions,
9 Orr's Court,
Bayswater W2 4RL.
December 19.

From Mr L. Good

Sir, In the debate about animal experimentation it is remarkable how often it is assumed that all animal research is medical.

Birds of prey

From the President of the British Falconers' Club

Sir, Jessica Ruggles (letter, December 15) asks how falconers can persuade their hawks to discriminate between types of bird. Hawks are "flown off the first at licensed quarry, which includes game birds, rabbits and hare. The hawk is held in place by the jesses attached to its ankles and is only released when the quarry is verified. To make doubly certain, pointing or flushing dogs are used and are trained to scent out only legitimate quarry. In the case of ground game, ferrets perform the same role.

Falconers and hawks quickly become wedded to specific quarry and subsequently take no notice of protected species — awaiting sight of those they are permitted to chase. If a flight is unsuccessful and the hawk takes stand in a tree it is recalled to the glove for reward before proceeding further.

There are only 3,000 falconers in the UK flying hawks at legitimate and traditional quarry; the nation's 60,000 wild sparrowhawks are just as natural in their actions, if less discriminating.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. WILSON,
President, British Falconers' Club,
The Haven, Ruan Minor,
Helston, Cornwall TR12 7JL.

From the Chairman of The Hawk Board

Sir, The National Trust decided to reinstate falconry on its land (report,

Needle exchanges

From Mr David Harding-Price

Sir, You report today that a survey conducted by the Tidy Britain Group has highlighted "the growing danger to public health from needles and other litter discarded by drug users".

These dangers are indeed real. However, in the experience of the former substance misuse committee of the Royal College of Nursing, well-run syringe and needle exchange schemes have a higher than 100 per cent return rate (because users may hand in more needles than they have received). Most such schemes work on the basis of a true exchange — ie, one

The latest available Home Office figures (1997) suggest that some 2.6 million experiments are performed on animals annually. At least one third of these were non-medical, and many involved the testing of commercial products for the assessment of maximum damage potential and the recording of data. Few of these products are essential for anyone's survival.

Given the purpose of the trials, the suffering induced in the animals used (which range from primates, horses, dogs and cats through to guinea pigs, birds and fish) can be so prolonged and so catastrophic that it is impossible to justify them in a civilised society.

If we had the courage and the integrity to take a lead on this issue, perhaps other countries would eventually follow.

Yours faithfully,
L. GOOD,
21 North End, Meldreth,
Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 6NR.
December 17.

From Mr Roger Shorter

Sir, Perhaps John Lloyd (letter, December 11), who claims that the abuse of animals is "an area in which the Church should have shown more interest", is unaware that this was one of the subjects addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the first of his Lenten addresses, delivered in Canterbury Cathedral on February 26 this year.

In it, Dr Carey referred to the need to think of "issues like cruelty to... battery chickens, vivisection and many other abuses". He concluded by saying "it is clear that we still have a long way to go".

Meanwhile, many Church-based animal welfare groups exist — Anglican, Catholic, evangelical, Quaker, and a Methodist one about to be formed.

Yours,
ROGER SHORTER,
32 Balderton Buildings,
Brown Hart Gardens, W1Y 1TT.
December 11.

December 5) on the grounds of evidence provided by the Hawk Board, which represents all falconry organisations.

Only two species — the sparrowhawk and the merlin — are small enough and agile enough to catch song birds, and the flying of these is controlled under special licence by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. We have agreed not to use these species on National Trust land.

The common falconry birds are used to catch bigger quarry, such as rabbits, crows or pheasants; they are too big and clumsy to attempt to chase little birds.

The dilemma for the National Trust is that domestic cats are allowed to hunt on its land. The Mammal Society survey this year showed that cats are killing 300 million wild animals, including many millions of protected birds and rare reptiles. The Joint Nature Conservation Council, scientific advisers to the DETR, has warned the department that cat predation could threaten these prey populations.

Cats are allowed to hunt unsupervised and uncontrolled, and often take a long time to kill their victims. Against this background it is obviously difficult for the National Trust to reach balanced conclusions on other species.

Yours faithfully,
JIM CHICK,
Chairman,
The Hawk Board,
Moonrakers, Allington,
Salisbury SP4 0BX.
December 15.

needle in for one out — and many of them stipulate a maximum number the user can take out at any one time.

For the Government's anti-drug co-ordinator to suggest the dangers are partly exacerbated as a result of these exchange programmes is naive and misleading. If as a society we are to tackle the problem of drug injection, we need to look at how the users can be engaged into systems currently available, rather than marginalised.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HARDING-PRICE
(Vice-Chairman, Substance Misuse Committee, 1993-95),
Royal College of Nursing,
20 Cavendish Square, W1M 0AB.
December 14.

Right of appeal

From Mr Martin Spencer

Sir, In a Practice Direction dated November 17, 1998, Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, announced that, as from January 1, 1999, all appeals to the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal except against committals orders, refusals to grant habeas corpus and secure accommodation orders, will require leave to appeal to be granted.

At present, there is a right of appeal in respect of all final judgments in the High Court and a large number of final judgments in the county court. Such a right to appeal may be thought to be an important part of the civil liberty of the citizen. It is surprising that such a fundamental change

be announced in the form of a practice direction (this change relates to much more than mere "practice"), in circumstances where there has been little or no consultation and with only six weeks' notice. May I beg leave to observe that this change, and the way that it has been brought about, may be thought unappealing?

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN SPENCER,
4 Paper Buildings,
Temple, EC4Y 7EX.
December 18.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Fleet Street as a refuge for patriots

From Mr Michael Cudlipp

Sir, Anthony Howard relates ("Tell me on a Sunday, Agent X", December 17) that he was shocked to discover a journalist colleague routinely reported to MI6 during the Cold War. I never knew of a correspondent being paid by the security services, but it was common practice when I worked in Fleet Street (*The Sunday Times* and *The Times*, 1958-73) for correspondents returning on leave to be extensively debriefed by the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office (and therefore doubtless by the security services).

Patriotism was probably the journalists' prime motivation, not to mention the opportunity to pick up covert information, but it was not healthy. One cannot help feeling that some correspondents were flattered and indeed excited by the attention. Also, that some were used to plant disinformation.

This use of journalists extended to home areas. Certainly, some political and defence journalists were given exclusive interviews and rewarded for good behaviour by their government sources with occasional tasty leaks. Payment to journalists, at least in kind, was common among motoring, travel, air, business and property correspondents. Cars on loan, free holidays, cases of Scotch, share tips.

No doubt everything is different nowadays. Perhaps, also, there are fewer lazy journalists. Lazy journalists love being fed with information from "irrefutable" sources that they don't need to check on. They also like honours for services to patriotism.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL CUDLIPP
(Deputy Editor, *The Times*, 1967-73),
25 Ballygate,
Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9ND.
December 19.

Britain's health

From Dr Michael Baxendale

Sir, How outrageous of Alastair MacLure to suggest that the food industry is responsible for making "40 per cent of us disease-prone through obesity" (letter, December 9). Do we force-feed our consumers? The consensus is clear that the main cause of obesity in Britain today is lack of physical activity.

The food and drink manufacturing industry employs 500,000 people who are dedicated to providing tasty, nutritious, safe foods at affordable prices.

Not only does it voluntarily provide nutrition information on packets and labels, but it also funds a healthy lifestyle campaign, "Join the activators", which promotes a balanced diet combined with active leisure.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BAXENDINE
(Chairman,
Communications Committee,
Food and Drink Federation,
6 Catherine Street, WC2B 5JJ,
December 9.

Branching out

From Mr L. B. van der Watt

Sir, Your report on Christmas trees (December 14) is right about the attractive qualities of the Noble Fir, but it is wide of the mark in stating that it "is virtually impossible to grow in most parts of Britain... where it is quickly killed off by frost". There are many beautiful stands of mature Noble Firs in Western and Central Scotland, including areas such as my own where frosts of -15C are sometimes experienced.

Noble Firs do require acidic soil and they will not grow in dry chalky soil. They grow quickly in the right conditions; I have some, planted as 12in seedlings, that have reached 20ft in eight years, and they can tolerate strong winds. One word of caution: they may grow as tall as 50 metres, and are not for small suburban gardens.

Yours faithfully,
L. B. van der WATT,
Halcyon House, Kipp Road,
Strathgry, Callander,
Perthshire FK18 8NQ.
December 15.

A giant step?

From Mr Jonathan Stiles

Sir, They can send a man to the Moon. How come they can't make a decent set of Christmas tree lights?

Yours,
JONATHAN STILES,
Field Place, Dunsfold,
Godalming, Surrey GU8 4LR.
December 19.

Circular greetings

From Mrs Gareth Morris

Sir, If there is anyone who has not holidayed in the West Indies, Val d'Aire, Lou or Kenya, whose children have achieved nothing, and who would like to send me a Christmas circular letter, I'd be awfully relieved to have it.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICIA MORRIS,
4 West Mall,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 4BH.
patricia.morris@btinternet.com
December 20.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 17: Mr Emmanuel Coter was received in audience by The Queen upon his appointment as High Commissioner for St Lucia.

Mrs Coter was received by Her Majesty.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 21: The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon laid a wreath on behalf of The Queen at the Lockerbie Memorial, Dumfriesshire.

His Royal Highness was met by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Dumfriesshire (Captain Ronald Cunningham-Jardine).

December 21: The Duke of York this evening attended a Service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Lockerbie Air Disaster.

KENSINGTON PALACE
December 21: The Duke of Gloucester, President, British Consultants Bureau, this afternoon received Mr Clive Hardcastle upon relinquishing his appointment as Chairman and Mr Peter Garratt upon assuming the appointment.

Birthdays today

Air Chief Marshal Sir John Alken, 77; Mr James Burke, broadcaster, 62; Viscount Davidson, 70; Miss E.M. Digby, High Mistress, St Paul's Girls School, 53; Mr Noel Edmonds, broadcaster, 50; Mr Geoffrey Fitchew, chairman, Building Societies Commission, 59; Mr Maurice Gibb and Mr Robin Gibb, singers, 49; Dr Judith McClure, Headmistress, St George's School for Girls, Edinburgh, 53; Sir Trefor Morris, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 64; Mr Chris Old, former cricketer, 50; the Rev Lord Sandford, 78; Lord Stott, 89; the Duke of Westminster, 47; Mr Ken Whitmore, playwright, 59; Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, journalist, 75.

Legal appointment

High Court
Mr David Roderick Lessner Bodey, QC, to be a Justice of the High Court, assigned to the Family Division.



Stuart Burnham, a National Trust warden, gives out early Christmas rations to some of the deer at Studley Royal, North Yorkshire

Lockerbie air disaster

The Duke of York attended an Act of Remembrance service held yesterday evening in Westminster Abbey to mark the 10th anniversary of the Lockerbie air disaster. The Dean of Westminster officiated, assisted by the Rev John Townend. The Rev John Mosey, of UK Families, Flight 103, bade welcome and preached the sermon.

Mr Marcus Mosey, a member of UK Families, Flight 103, read the lesson. Mrs Jane Swire, also a member of UK Families, Flight 103, read a prayer which was also read in Lockerbie, Syracuse, New York State, and Arlington, Virginia. Ms Pamela Doherty read *Do not stand at my grave and weep*, and Dr Michael Woolf, Director of Syracuse University in England, said words of encouragement.

During the service relatives

and Dr Woolf read out the names of the 270 who died. Leonie Adams, 60, a sixth form student at King Edward VI High School for Girls, which lost two former pupils in the disaster, played *Flowers from Suite No 2* by J.S. Bach and Mr Hector McKernzie, piper, played *Flowers of the Forest*. Canon Robert Wright was robed and in the Sanctuary.

Highland Cathedral and Amazing Grace were played by two pipers after the service. The Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP, Mr Robin Cook, MP, Lord Parkinson, Mr Tam Dalyell, MP, and Mrs Dalyell and Mr Teddy Taylor attended.

The American Ambassador was represented by Mr Robert A. Bradtke, Deputy Chief of Mission.

Service dinner

Combined Cadet Force Association
General Geoffrey Howlett, President of the Combined Cadet Force Association, presided at the annual officers' dinner held last night at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London. General Sir

Roger Wheeler, Chief of the Defence Staff, was the principal guest and Wing Commander A.V.M. Murray, Contingent Commander of Fettes College CCF, Edinburgh, was the dinner chairman. Major-General M.T. Tennant, Brigadier A.J.M. Duncan and Brigadier J.E. Neeve were among those present.

Dinner

Royal Society of Saint George's
The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, attended the Christmas dinner of the City of London branch of the Royal Society of Saint George's held last night at the Mansion House. His Honour Michael Chism, president. The Lord Mayor, Sir Michael Knight and the Rev Basil Watson, honorary chaplain, were the speakers.

Luncheon

Rotary Club of London
Mr John Buchanan, President of the Rotary Club of London, presided at the Christmas luncheon held yesterday at the Portman Hotel. Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Mr Tom Loftus, Mr Neville Shudman, Mr Bill Nimmo, Mr Arthur Thompson and Mr Clifford Charles were among those present.

Church in Wales

Bangor Diocese
The Rev Peter Pritchard, currently Rector of Llanfihangel, Anglesey, is to be Cleric-in-Charge of Llanfihangel and Llanbedrog, Anglesey from January.

Dayford Owen, recently Director of the McLeod Centre on Iona, has been appointed Youth Officer of the Bangor Diocese from February 1.

University news

MANCHESTER

Appointments to chairs
Promotional Chair of Neurophysiology
David Michael Andrew Mann, BSc(Durham), PhD(Manchester), FRCP, at present Reader in Pathology in this University, as Professor of Neurophysiology from October 1, 1998.

Promotional Chair of Nuclear Physics
John Leonard Durell, BSc, PhD(Liverpool), at present Reader in Physics in this University, as Professor of Nuclear Physics from October 1, 1998.

Change of title
Council has appointed Professor Frank Read to the Langworthy Chair of Physics from October 1, 1998 (in lieu of his present title of Professor of Physics).

Honorary appointments
Professor J.A.V. Chapple as Honorary Professor of English Literature from October 1, 1998 for three years in the first instance.

Professor Rod Coombs as Honorary Professor in the ESRC Centre for Research on Innovation and Competition (CRIC), from January 1, 1999

concurrently with his appointment as Executive Director of CRIC.

Honorary Visiting Professors
Professor Ganapathy Ramachandran as Honorary Visiting Professor in the Manchester School of Engineering from October 1, 1998, for three years in the first instance.

Mr Brian Cunningham as Honorary Visiting Professor of Business Administration in the Manchester Business School and the Faculty of Business Administration from October 1, 1998, for three years in the first instance.

Professor Yasuo Kawai as Honorary Visiting Professor in Economic History from April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000.

Visiting Professor
Dr Richard Francis as Visiting Professor in Creative Writing in the Department of English and American Studies from October 1, 1998, for two years in the first instance.

Honorary Senior Lecturer
Dr Stephen John Hopkins as Honorary Senior Lecturer in the North Western Injury Research Centre from September 1, 1998, for three years in the first instance.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr N.W.S. Browner and Miss J.E. Towler, of Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, announce the engagement of their youngest daughter, Joanna, to Nigel, only son of Mr and Mrs Peter Browner, of Dulais, Hereford.

Mr J. Denney and Miss R.G. Beard
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, younger son of Mr Philip Denney and the late Mrs Lyne Denney, of Torquay, Devon, and Rachel, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Beard, of Hove, Sussex.

Mr J.M.O. Evans and Miss C.V. Ansell
The engagement is announced between Jeremy, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Evans, of Hawkhurst, Kent, and Clare, daughter of Major General and Mrs Nick Ansell, of Bideford, Devon.

Mr G.D. Marriage and Miss P. Browne
The engagement is announced between Giles, only son of Mr Philip Marriage and Mrs Gail Rick, of Blackmore, Essex, and Penelope, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Browne, of Yate, Bristol.

Mr J.W. Robson and Miss F.M.I. Halford-MacLeod
The engagement is announced between Jasper, son of Mr and Mrs John Robson, of Ayot Green, Hertfordshire, and Fiona, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs Philip Halford-MacLeod, of Strathmiglo, Fife.

Mr R.C.H. Eastwood and Mrs M.A. Atkins
The engagement is announced between Richard Eastwood, elder son of the late Mr and Mrs Charles Eastwood, of Loughborough, Leicestershire, and Rebecca, daughter of the late Mr Patrick Bell-Scott and of Mrs Bell-Scott.

Mr K.J. Hilton-Garner and Miss R.C. Appleby
The engagement is announced between K.J., son of Mr Ray Hilton-Garner, of Farnham, and Mrs Gwynor Hilton-Garner, of Christchurch, Dorset, and Rebecca, eldest daughter of Dr and Mrs Michael Appleby, of Chesham, Buckinghamshire.

Mr P.E.G. Liddle and Miss R.M. Tunnes
The engagement is announced between Patrick, son of Mrs Angela Robson, of Malshanger, Hampshire, and the late Mr John Liddle, of Kenley, Surrey.

Mr P.L. Smith and Miss E.J.L. Hooper
The engagement is announced between Peter Leslie, youngest son of Mr and Mrs W.E. Smith, of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, and Emma Jane Louise, only child of Mr and Mrs W.J. Hooper, of Lullington Court, Lullington, Derbyshire. The marriage will take place on August 14, 1999.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Jean Henri Fabre, naturalist, St-Léon, France, 1823; Giacomo Puccini, composer, Lucca, Italy, 1858; Edgar Varese, composer, Paris, 1883.

DEATHS: Duc de Sully, soldier and statesman, Villebon, France, 1641; William Hyde Wollaston, physician, London, 1828; George Eliot, novelist, London, 1880; Dwight Moody, evangelist, Northfield, Massachusetts, 1899; Baron Richard von Krafft-Ebing, neuropsychiatrist, Graz, 1902; Nathaniel West, novelist, El Cerrito, California, 1940; Beatrice Potter, children's writer, Sawrey, Lancashire, 1943; Harry Langdon, silent film star, California, 1944.

Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, was imprisoned on Devil's Island on a charge of espionage, later proved false, 1894.

Wilhelm Röntgen made the first radiograph or X-ray of his wife's hand, 1895.

The 70mph speed limit was introduced in Britain, 1965.

Church news

Appointments
The Rev Stuart Cleaver, Priest-in-Charge, Whippingham in East Cowes (Porthsmouth) to be Rector, same benefice.

The Rev Brian Cowen, Vicar, Lesbury in Alnmouth, and Rural Dean of Alnmouth (Newcastle) to be Priest-in-Charge, Longhoughton in Howick (same diocese).

The Rev Roger Cotter, Chaplain, HM Forces (Navy) to be Vicar, Gosforth St Nicholas (Newcastle).

The Rev Edward Dixon, Chaplain, HMP Aycliffe (Newcastle) to be half-time Priest-in-Charge, Shildon, remaining as half-time Chaplain, HMP Aycliffe (same diocese).

The Rev Jonathan Hoffmann, Curate, Easton (Norwich) to be Curate, Hoxton St Mary the Virgin (Cambridge).

The Rev Gwyneth Humphries, Priest-in-Charge, Mayfield, and Local Ministry Adviser (Lichfield) to be also Rural Dean of Uttoxeter (same diocese).

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

DEATHS

ABELA - Albert, suddenly but peacefully at his home, 17, Very dear husband of Barbara, devoted and loving father of Sarah, Richard, Adam, and families. Loving brother of Betty, Rose, and Mary. Funeral service at St. Mary's Church, 10.30am, 23rd Dec. Enquiries 01855 470238.

BIRTHS

BATHURST - On 17th December to Amanda (née Holt) and to Charles, a daughter Hermione Mary Callender, a sister for Theophanes and Ianthe.

MEGILL - On December 15th at The Portland Hospital in Little (née Laidlaw) and Richard, a daughter, Clara, a sister for Emma, Ryan and Cathryn.

BUCKETT - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital to Sylvia and Alex, a daughter, Erika, a sister for Eleanor and Guillaume.

COOKE - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital in Little (née Laidlaw) and Richard, a daughter, Clara, a sister for Emma, Ryan and Cathryn.

BLUES - On 17th December 1998, in Johannesburg, to Hugh and Patricia, a second son, Frederick Robert Christian.

FAWCEIT - Richard and Fiona (née Westwater), a daughter Phoebe Eleanor, born in Hong Kong on 15th December, a sister for Jamie and Rosie.

KOTTLER - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital to Elaine (née Muir) and Charles, a son, George Andrew.

MACPHERSON - On December 18th in Zurich to Claire and Andrew, a son, Alexander Robert William, a brother for Jamie and Abigail.

McGOWAN - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital to Anne-Marie and William, a son, Darragh, a brother for Niamh.

PADOVANI - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital to Francesca (née Perceval) and Marco, a daughter, Anna, a sister for Tobias.

SEBENT-ALLEN - On December 18th at St. Mary's Hospital, London, to Catherine Alexandra and Frank, a wonderful son, Roger Abel, a brother for Melissa Isabel.

TURBELL - On December 18th at The Portland Hospital to Patricia (née Jones) and David, a daughter, Holly Amber.

VICTOR - Mike and Debbie are proud to announce the arrival of a beautiful daughter, Katharine Marian, on December 18th.

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ABELA - Albert, suddenly but peacefully at his home, 17, Very dear husband of Barbara, devoted and loving father of Sarah, Richard, Adam, and families. Loving brother of Betty, Rose, and Mary. Funeral service at St. Mary's Church, 10.30am, 23rd Dec. Enquiries 01855 470238.

ADAM - (née Metcalfe) at Dundee, on 18th December 1998, Anne Margaret, beloved wife of John Adam, dear mother of Judith, Liz and Ralph, step-mother of Alexander, a loving and much loved grandmother, step-grandmother and great-grandmother. Family funeral service, No flowers, but if desired, to be held at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Adam, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

BENSON - Dr. Edmund (Eddie), peacefully on 17th December 1998, at his home, 17, Jangle, loving and devoted father to his son-in-law Trevor and his daughter, Rose. Remembered by his son-in-law Trevor and his daughter, Rose. Remembered by his son-in-law Trevor and his daughter, Rose. Remembered by his son-in-law Trevor and his daughter, Rose.

BLOCK - Hannah beloved wife of David, died peacefully at St. John's Hospital, 18th December 1998. Funeral service at St. John's Church, 10.30am, 23rd Dec. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Block, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

CONCORAN - On December 18th peacefully at home after a short illness. Gerald, much loved husband, father and grandfather. Private funeral service. Family flowers only.

DANIEL - E. H. C. (Hope), formerly of Chichester, died peacefully at home, 18th December 1998, aged 85. Beloved husband of Mary, dear father to his son-in-law Paul. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Daniel, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

DOYLE - On December 18th peacefully in hospital Jack Douglas Spencer of Southborough, Norfolk, aged 59 years. Loving husband of Sara, dear father to his son-in-law and daughter. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Doyle, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

GRANVILLE - (née Martin) died peacefully at home, 18th December 1998, aged 85. Beloved wife of John, dear mother to her son-in-law Paul. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Granville, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

HAGAN - (née Holmwood) widow of late Colonel John Hagan OBE TD, born 18th Dec 1912. Peacefully at home, 18th Dec 1998, aged 85. Beloved wife of John, dear mother to her son-in-law Paul. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Hagan, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

KNOWLES - (née Martin) died peacefully at home, 18th December 1998, aged 85. Beloved wife of John, dear mother to her son-in-law Paul. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Knowles, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

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FAULK - Elizabeth Anne on 18th December 1998 peacefully at 88, 18th December 1998, aged 88. Beloved wife of John, dear mother to her son-in-law Paul. Funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, December 23rd at 10.30am. Enquiries to Mrs. J. Faulk, 10, Victoria Road, Dundee, DD1 1NG.

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FAULK - Elizabeth Anne on 18

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AND
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY DECEMBER 22 1998

IMF says UK must cut base rates further

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN has room for further deep cuts in interest rates and so long as they are delivered the country should be in economic recovery in the second half of next year, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

The call for further rate cuts from the Bank of England came as the IMF published its latest world economic outlook in which growth is forecast to drop to 0.9 per cent in 1999, which, in line with the Treasury's predictions, will mean that Britain escapes recession. The news helped to spur a big jump in the stock market in London where the FTSE 100 of leading shares surged to close 134.6 points higher at 5,876.5. The rise had traders eyeing a spectacular recovery in the blue chip index after a nervous autumn, with the FTSE possibly rising through 6,000 by the end of the year.

Much of yesterday's rise was down to a resurgent Wall Street, where investors were cheering the end of air strikes against Iraq and ignoring Saturday's vote to begin impeachment proceedings against President Clinton. With the addition of the so-called "Santa Claus" effect of markets rising at the end of the trading year, the Dow Jones industrial average was nearly 150 points higher in early afternoon trading at 9,050.

In its report, the IMF praised the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee for its recent reversal in the direction of interest rate policy. It added, however, that even after total cuts of 1.25 percentage points, monetary policy was still relatively tight and that "there is significant scope for rates to be

cut further as growth weakens and inflation concerns recede". In a separate report of its annual assessment of Britain published today, the IMF said that "private sector fundamentals are strong; and past policies have ensured that monetary policy is well placed to respond appropriately, and fiscal policy to utilise fully the automatic stabilisers".

The IMF concludes that "it is likely, therefore, that the slowdown will be short-lived". The IMF forecast that American growth would drop to 1.8 per cent in 1999 from 3.6 per cent this year but said that this slowdown was needed to restore the economy to a more sustainable path and should not be counteracted by further cuts in US interest rates.

In Britain, the IMF forecast that underlying inflation will remain on target at 2.5 per

cent in 1999 but that unemployment will rise to a rate of 5.1 per cent next year from 4.7 per cent in 1998.

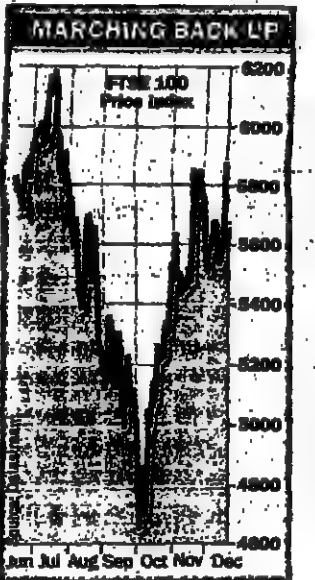
Final figures for third-quarter gross domestic product showed that Britain ran the biggest balance of payments surplus for 17 years. The current account was in the black to the tune of £2.3 billion. However, City economists said that the figures were freakish, largely reflecting huge losses made by foreign banks in the City from the implosion of Russia and the near-collapse of Long Term Capital Management.

Balance of payments figures count profits made by foreign banks as cash exported from the country. Losses are counted as income. Underlying figures show that Britain's trade performance is deteriorating. Trade in goods showed a deficit of £5.2 billion, the highest since early 1990.

The results of the IMF's annual assessment of the UK was glowing. It welcomed Bank of England independence and said that the way that it had responded to its job had been "impressive". It praised fiscal policy, saying that "the degree of fiscal consolidation achieved by the Government since coming to office can only be viewed as highly commendable".

It recommended that the Government switch to the European measure of consumer prices, on which basis British inflation is near the European average. It said that targeting the RPIX measure of underlying inflation "appears to needlessly self short the extent of the UK's inflation convergence" with Europe.

IMF on slump risks, page 23



Douglas Hall, left, and Freddy Shepherd arrive at the Newcastle United annual meeting where they were met by angry fans

Newcastle pair torn off a strip by angry investors

By JASON NISSE

DOUGLAS HALL and Freddy Shepherd, the controversial directors of Newcastle United who resigned earlier this year after insulting fans, players and local women, ran the gauntlet of angry fans at the club's delayed annual meeting yesterday.

Shareholders, some of whom have lost thousands of pounds in the 22 months that Newcastle has been a public company, accused the board of

"selling the club down the river" for backing a £160 million bid from NTL, the US cable company. The bid values Newcastle at 17 per cent less than the 135p a share float price.

However, the real anger was saved for Mr Hall and Mr Shepherd, who offered themselves for election to the board, a result that was a foregone conclusion as they control 64 per cent of the club's shares.

An overwhelming majority of those who attended the meeting voted against their return but when a poll was taken the two received the support of shareholders speaking for 70.6 per cent of Newcastle's shares with just 3.7 per cent opposing them.

The meeting, at Newcastle Civic Hall, had been delayed two weeks because of a row about the return of Mr Hall and Mr Shepherd which led to the resignation of the group's chairman, Denis Cassidy.

At times the AGM threatened to collapse into farce with shareholder after shareholder attacking the board.

"I find it sad that the present management has created such ill will from the city and the supporters," said Alan Clark, a shareholder, while another, Ted Ablett, of Durham, said: "The die has been cast and we are effectively only here as part of a paper exercise."

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5876.5 (+134.6)
Yield	2.77%
FTSE All Share	6000.0 (00.00)
Nikkei	14192.95 (-41.34)
New York	9060.94 (+157.31)*
Dow Jones	1206.54 (+18.51)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(5.75%)
Long bond	102.24	(103.4)
Yield	5.07%	(5.01%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	8.75%	(8.75%)
Life long gilt	118.25	(118.62)

STERLING

New York	1.6812	(1.6822)
London	1.6810	(1.6817)
DM	2.8125	(2.7987)
FF	6.4338	(6.3849)
Sfr	2.2882	(2.2834)
Yen	185.14	(194.50)
£ Index	101.2	(100.7)

\$\$\$ DOLLAR

London	1.5740	(1.5820)
DM	5.5910	(5.5775)
Sfr	1.2625	(1.2470)
Yen	116.18	(115.10)
£ Index	106.0	(104.8)

Tokyo close Yen 114.80

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$10.10	(\$10.20)
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GOLD

London close	\$388.95	(\$390.4)
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* denotes midday trading prices

Volvo soars on bid rumours

SHARES in Volvo, the Swedish motor manufacturer, raced ahead yesterday as speculation that Ford, the US giant, is seeking an alliance or may even bid for the company.

Volvo shares soared 7 per cent, before slipping to close 2.6 per cent higher at 178.10 crowns (£12.75) on the Stockholm market. The company refused to confirm or deny the speculation. A spokesman said: "We hold talks with everyone. This does not necessarily involve a sale."

Ford UK deal, page 23

BRC doubt on official figures

By JANET BUSH

THE accuracy of the official figures that said sales on the high street bounced in November were called into question yesterday by the British Retail Consortium, the body representing nine in ten UK retailers.

The BRC, which has repeatedly highlighted the plight of retailers in the run-up to what has been dubbed "Black Christmas", said that figures from the Office for National Statistics showing a 0.8 per cent rise in sales volumes last month may be inaccurate and could end up being revised down. The BRC estimated that sales had fallen 0.4 per cent in November.

A BRC spokesman said: "We're not denigrating the ONS figures in any way, but there's a history of the [retail sales] figures having to be revised and rebalanced."

In a day of statistical tiff-for-tat, the ONS, responsible for official sales figures, swiftly re-

torted that it had absolute confidence in its members and received strong support from analysts in the City.

Richard Jeffrey, chief economist at The Charterhouse Group, said: "The official figures have proved very reliable over the years. They have far more street credibility than the BRC figures."

The ONS said that three month comparisons give a better idea of underlying trends in a series which is, frankly, volatile. Its figures show that the value of sales in the three months to November was up 3.0 per cent on the same period a year ago, not widely out of line with the BRC's own figure of 2.8 per cent.

The ONS also noted that its figures are based on a sample of 5,000 firms, covering the range of the sector, including mail order, while the BRC's statistics are drawn from a survey of the 75 largest retailers.

Moses film fails to command

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

THE *Prince of Egypt*, the film that was supposed to position Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks studio as a Hollywood rival to Walt Disney has seen a disappointing response to its opening in the US.

The animated epic based on the biblical story of Moses was overtaken at the box office in its opening weekend by a movie called *You've Got Mail* about e-mailing. The long-awaited *Prince of Egypt* took \$14 million (£8 million), \$4 million less than the film about internet lovers Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

The weekend before Christmas is the key launch date for Hollywood when films jostle for sales ahead of the Oscars. Wall Street has seen The *Prince of Egypt* launch as the make-or-buy point for DreamWorks, which Spielberg set up four years ago.

GEC cancels Christmas leave

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

GEC's race to strike a merger deal with British Aerospace postponed yesterday as all Christmas holiday for directors and key advisers was cancelled.

With GEC executives locked in meetings yesterday in a bid to thrash out the best way forward, shares in both companies pepped up with BAE adding 20p to 530p and GEC gaining 28p to 556p.

The imminence of an announcement, which will change the tack of BAE's plans for a merger with the US-German giant DaimlerChrysler, was heightened when GEC's brokers and key advisers were told to cancel any breaks over the holiday period.

Talks between GEC and officials at the Ministry of Defence were ongoing last night. It is thought that the Department of Trade and Industry will also be involved in any move that will mark a substantial reshaping of both the British and European aerospace and defence industry.

GEC directors are thought to be aiming to finalise their decision in a meeting in the next two days, although an announcement may not be made until the new year. Observers believe it may still be possible that GEC could yet try to link with a US company. However, while GEC has talked to a number of companies in recent months, that move is thought unlikely.

A link with BAE could be a full-scale £23 billion merger or an absorption by BAE of GEC Marconi. The move is crucial to which way BAE goes with its planned tie up with DASA - DaimlerChrysler Aerospace. The UK Government, which is keen to encourage European consolidation, is thought to favour links that involve all three parties.

Floating will lift Air France staff

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR



Spinaetta: staff will benefit

AIR FRANCE pilots and staff could end up controlling almost a quarter of the shares in the £2 billion airline when it is floated on the French stock market early next year.

The airline, led by Jean-Cyril Spinaetta, has confirmed that the French Government plans a Fr3.5 billion to Fr4 billion (about £400 million) offer of shares to the public early next year. Previously the Government indicated that the offering would amount to up to a fifth of

the equity. However, a pay deal with striking airline pilots last summer, other shares owned by staff and bank loans convertible into equity mean that the Government's stake will be diluted to 52 to 53 per cent.

Air France staff will be the main beneficiaries of the flotation. According to a spokesman, with existing shareholders staff could hold up to 23.5 per cent of the airline. The summer strike, which threatened chaos at the start of the World

Cup and cost the company Fr1.3 billion, led to a wages-for-shares swap. Pilots were offered shares in exchange for agreement to forgo an equivalent sum in salary. Depending on the level of participation, pilots alone could end up with 12 per cent of Air France.

Controversy has dogged Air France's preparations to float, with rival airlines attempting to block a Fr20 billion government bail-out of the airline. British Airways and other Euro-

pean airlines secured a court ruling that the state aid was illegal but the European Commission said that it complied with European law because it formed part of a restructuring and cost-cutting programme.

Analysts speculated that Air France's share offering would need to be cheap to get off the ground. Richard Hannah, of BT Alex Brown, said: "The airline industry is having a rough time. It is not an easy time to float an airline."

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EMU will bear fruit for shoppers

NEIL SELBY is one of 120 buyers, whose job it is to get goods from supplier to customer with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of customer satisfaction, and, of course, the maximum of profit.

Like all of the supermarket's buyers, Mr Selby, who is responsible for keeping Sainsbury's shelves stocked with long-life fruit juice, had just been to one of a series of briefings run by its treasury department on how the euro could affect his job.

He came away from the briefing reassured that the introduction of the euro will make his job easier for the simple reason that he will have to deal with fewer currencies. "We are ready to do deals in euros, and I haven't got any qualms about it. It's just another currency. What I'd like to have one in my hand, that is when it will hit."

One of the points of the treasury briefings, he said, was to make sure that any worries the buyers had were properly addressed and to make sure that all the people involved

in the final run up to economic and monetary union, "The Times looks at how businesses are adjusting to this change to our trading environment. In a series ranging from our dealers to lawyers, we find out how people's jobs have changed, what problems and opportunities have emerged and how they have dealt with them. Today, Neil Selby, a buyer at Sainsbury's, explains about "The euro and me".

The Euro and me

were "speaking the same language". Mr Selby thinks that Sainsbury's, like the other supermarket groups, should see some financial benefit from the introduction of the euro, because transaction costs will fall and because it will be easier for buyers to compare prices across Europe.

This should, in theory, result

in lower prices for consumers. Mr Selby expects that the company's customers will also spend some time making price comparisons when they travel across Europe.

"As buyers, we will have the opportunity to look at costs across national boundaries, so we should be able to get better prices. The euro is being sold on the idea that the pressures are going to be downwards," he said.

"Now, if it is a very big deal and I have the time, I can take out all the currency and transport costs and so on. The euro will make this very much easier," he added. "It will give us a chance to probe a little deeper into costs."

Like many others, Mr Selby recognises that it is all theoretical at this stage, particularly as the UK is remaining *sopra partes*. "The debates are all rather divorced and there are so many uncertainties, such as will the euro be strong against the pound? How will it affect unemployment. It's a suck it and see thing."

The retail side of the business has also had to get in-



Neil Selby is enthusiastic, believing the euro will result in lower prices for consumers

volved because the group has some stores in France, which will have to switch over from the punt when euro notes and coins are introduced.

Mr Selby may be relaxed about the effect the euro will

have on his job, but he is enthusiastic about it from a personal point of view. He has to travel quite a lot for his work, and cannot wait to use the euro when he is in one of the 11 countries adopting it. "When I can

pay in euros it will be great fun." Best of all, if and when the UK does join up, he is looking forward to getting his first euro-denominated pay slip.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM

US boost for Virgin Atlantic

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

VIRGIN ATLANTIC has won an important concession in its battle to launch a domestic US airline after the Clinton Administration proposed changes in airline ownership rules that will give greater control to foreign companies in US ventures.

Non-US carriers are currently limited to holding a 25 per cent stake in domestic airlines. Richard Branson, the Virgin chairman who has repeatedly tried to set up shop in America, has declined to operate under these rules.

Under the new rules proposed by Rodney Slater, Transportation Secretary, foreign companies can own up to at least 49 per cent of a domestic carrier. This would bring the US in line with most European countries. Mr Slater did not specify the exact percentage ownership to be allowed and said "the percentage could be higher". But analysts said it was unlikely to be more than 49 per cent.

Banana war strikes at Italian cheesemakers

BY CARL MORTISHED INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

THE US and Europe are on the brink of a trade war that will threaten Italian makers of ewes' milk cheese in order to protect the rights of banana pickers in Honduras.

The Office of the US Trade Representative yesterday published a list of European products threatened with crippling duties in retaliation against Europe's banana regime. The US Government claims that the EU discriminates against Central American bananas where the US companies, Chiquita Brands and Dole, have large interests. The list-for-tat sanctions will cost "hundreds of millions of dollars" according to a US spokesman and were described by Sir Leon Brittan, the EU Trade Commissioner, as "unilateralism at its worst". He

said: "This list is arbitrary in what it covers and in its value. It threatens European firms and jobs which have no link with the banana dispute whatsoever."

The list is a bizarre collection of specific products, including cashmere sweaters, peo-



Barshesky: door still open

no cheese (not suitable for grating), waffles, chandeliers and electrothermic teamakers. It also comprises industrial products such as paperboard and folding paper cartons as well as the curiously vague "articles of a kind normally carried in the pocket or handbag, with outer surface of reinforced or laminated plastics".

Sir Leon raised the temperature of the transatlantic row further by threatening to accelerate the procedure leading to a World Trade Organisation Panel against the US measures. He said: "This dispute is no longer about bananas — it is about respect for the multilateral trade system."

The sanctions will come into force on February 1 if neither side backs down. However, Charlene Barshesky, the US Trade Representative, threw Brussels a small olive branch yesterday, saying: "Our door remains open to a negotiated

settlement consistent with the EU's WTO obligations."

The sanctions explicitly exclude products from The Netherlands and Denmark, which, according to the US, had voted against the adoption of the EU banana regime. The list also notably excludes products such as Scotch whisky and French wine, which would have aroused vigorous anti-American sentiment among powerful producer groups.

Ms Barshesky said the US had spent six years seeking redress against the EU banana regime, which favours products from former colonial dependencies in the Caribbean and Africa. Together with Central American states, the US secured a WTO ruling against the regime in 1997, though Washington insists that the EU's new regime perpetuates the discrimination.

Commentary, page 23

S&P reveals worries over M&S

BY PAUL DURMAN

STANDARD & POOR'S, the debt-rating agency, believes the outlook for Marks & Spencer has turned negative because the stores group has become less resilient to recession.

Although S&P reaffirmed M&S's AAA rating, it has become concerned about the group's strategy. It said: "Ratings could be downgraded if operating margins show no sign of significant and sustained recovery, and if a clear and consistent strategy does not stem from the strategic review in progress."

M&S was buffeted by a high-profile boardroom power struggle that caused Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman, to surrender the position of chief executive to Peter Salsbury.

S&P said that while the retailer's finances remained extremely strong, the downturn in consumer spending had caused retail operating margins in the UK to fall steeply to 8.8 per cent from 11.9 per cent in the first half of last year.

Pep and unit trust sales leap by a third

SALES of unit trusts and personal equity plans leapt by nearly a third to £845.7 million last month as private investors renewed their faith in the stock market. Net retail sales jumped 68 per cent to £385.5 million in November, two months after the late-summer crash. After a dip in October, sales growth bounced back £25.8 million to £385.7 million. Sales growth was strongest in unit trusts outside the Pep wrapper, however, as independent financial advisers and company sales forces encouraged investors hit by falling interest rates to take shelter in equity income and corporate bond funds.

Institutional investors were more cautious, increasing their commitment by £13.7 million to £260.2 million. Buoyed by the recovery in the market, funds under management by unit trust companies rose 5 per cent to £178 billion, although this is still below the level recorded in March. Philip Warland, director-general of Autif, said: "Investors in November maintained confidence in the investment fund market. With interest rates in the UK and further afield on a downward path, surplus cash looking for income has taken advantage of the wealth of opportunities in both bond and balanced funds."

Warning hits Gremlin

SHARES in Gremlin, the computer games company behind titles such as *Motorhead* and *Men in Black*, dived 27 per cent to 91p yesterday, after it issued a profit warning blamed on "an increasingly competitive market and a difficult retail environment". The company said that sales would be substantially ahead of the same period last year, but significantly below expectations. It also complained of increased marketing and product development costs. Gremlin said the exact outcome of trading performance in the first half would depend upon sales over the next six weeks.

Compass buys stake

COMPASS GROUP, the contract catering company, has paid \$78 million (£47 million) for a 50 per cent stake in GR, the largest foodservices business in Brazil, previously wholly owned by Accor of France. Accor owns 4.6 per cent of Compass shares and the two companies already work closely together in a number of countries, including Brazil. Brazil is the fifth-largest institutional catering market in the world, with a total of 8.5 million meals served daily, representing estimated annual sales of \$8 billion, a fifth of which is outsourced.

De La Rue agrees sale

DE LA RUE, the printing and smart cards group, has agreed to sell its loss-making swipe card terminals business to Ingenico, which is based in Paris, for £9.5 million, payable in Ingenico shares. De La Rue will receive 4.41 per cent of Ingenico, which it intends to retain in the medium term. The terminals business had net assets of £8.0 million. It made a loss of £1.8 million on sales of £7.9 million for the six months to September 30. The company will incur a loss on the disposal of about £15 million.

MWB to buy Star City

MARYLEBONE Warwick Balfour Group, the property developer, has agreed to buy Birmingham's Star City leisure park for up to £80 million, on behalf of its MWB Leisure Fund II. Due for completion in 2000 and located on a 25-acre site at Spaghetti Junction alongside the M6, Star City will be the largest commercial leisure scheme in Europe. The 390,000 sq ft park is currently being developed in a joint venture by Richardson Developments and Tarmac Developments.

Ambishus shares up

SHARES in Ambishus Pub Company, which floated on AIM in May, frothed almost 20 per cent higher as it reported strong trading in its community-based pubs. The 42-strong group reported operating profits before exceptional of £1.37 million from sales of £10 million in the 45 weeks to October. At the pre-tax level, it made a loss of £218,000 after taking into account £745,000 of exceptional. The shares jumped 15p to 103p. Philip Snook, chairman, said: "The kind of trading style we have is as recession-proof as you can get."

Rugby's Pioneer sale

RUGBY GROUP, the building materials company, yesterday announced the sale of Pioneer Plastics, its US laminates subsidiary, for \$160 million (£96 million), as part of the group restructuring announced at the end of last month. Rugby expects to book a £40 million pre-tax profit on the sale to the US company Panolam, from which a goodwill write back of £5.8 million will be deducted. A further £15 million may be payable, based on the combined profitability of Pioneer and Panolam.

Sherwood to shed 300

SHERWOOD, the textiles group based in Nottingham, said it is axing 300 jobs after the decision to close four manufacturing units. The company blamed poor trading conditions in the UK high street as well as the continuing worldwide weakness in the demand for lace. The closures will, with the previous decision to close its household lace operation, cost the company £7.2 million in exceptional charges. The company said it is still in discussions with the management team, who are considering a 48p share bid for the company.

Tay Homes optimistic

TAY HOMES, the housebuilder, yesterday said purchaser confidence had returned after the uncertainty of September and October. In a trading statement the group said interest rate reductions had returned sales reservations to normal levels for the time of year, adding that "a further decline in interest rates could add impetus to the market when it traditionally regains momentum in January". It also said that it had completed its strategic review, but had decided not to give Sunley, which holds a 10 per cent stake, the board representation that it sought.

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CHANGING TIMES

IMF sees risks of global slump ease

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE DANGER of worldwide recession has receded in recent weeks, according to the latest economic report by the International Monetary Fund, which yesterday revised upwards its growth forecasts for this year.

The IMF's latest economic outlook suggests that with growth likely to disappoint in the new year, there is scope to lower interest rates because inflationary pressure is absent. Despite some cautious optimism, the IMF has cut its 1999

world growth forecast to 2.2 per cent, from the 2.5 per cent published in October. At the same time, it has revised up its figure for 1998 growth to 2.2 per cent, based on a stronger than expected US performance.

However, Japan remains a big risk to the world economy. The IMF has revised a forecast of 0.5 per cent growth in 1999 to a 0.5 per cent contraction, citing doubts about Japan's initiatives to revive its economy.

Swiss Re acquires FPK for £200m

BY RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

FOX-PITT, KELTON (FPK), the privately owned investment bank, is being acquired by Swiss Re in a deal that City sources said was valued at about £200 million.

Swiss Re, the insurance group, is offering to swap its own shares for the entire FPK share capital, which is held by about just over half of the firm's 200-strong workforce.

Anthony Hamilton, chairman of FPK, said the firm had

turned away other suitors, but accepted Swiss Re's offer as it represented an ideal fit.

Mr Hamilton said FPK, a specialist in providing advice and research to the financial services industry, would be able to use Swiss Re's AAA credit rating to enter the capital markets as a primary rather than agency force. It was established in 1971, and made £27 million (£16 million) pre-tax profit in the year to April.

Standard in deal with Pru

STANDARD CHARTERED, the international banking group, yesterday said it is entering into a joint venture with Prudential to distribute the life insurer's products (Richard Miles writes).

The bank said the venture will initially focus on Hong Kong and Singapore, although it may be extended to other Asian countries where the two companies operate.

Trafford Centre gives Peel boost

BY ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

THE showpiece Trafford Centre shopping complex in Manchester is helping Peel Holdings, the property developer, to withstand the effect of the slowing UK economy.

The £3 million sq ft centre opened in September and the company said yesterday that of the 287 shop units available 260 were let. John Whittaker, chairman, said shopper numbers are up with expectations with 500,000 visits a week.

However, Mr Whittaker also said: "The reasonably benign conditions experienced during the half year, may be the precursor to a slowdown."

Standard in deal with Pru

BY ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

Peel's debts climbed during the period and at September 30 gearing stood at 91 per cent compared with 77 per cent six months earlier.

The group showed its confidence by raising its interim dividend 18 per cent. Pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 rose 7 per cent to £6.2 million. The dividend is 3.2p against 2.7p.

Peel also owns land at Liverpool airport where passenger traffic numbers are expected to rise from 691,000 to 900,000 this year.

Standard in deal with Pru

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Night before the morning after



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Don't trust year-end trading. Do not trust, especially, trading in the days leading up to the confusing launch of the euro, let alone the millennium in a year's time.

Private investors have been warned not to trust stock market prices in the second half of December because the combination of pre-euro caution and the side-lining of the market-making reforms was likely to make share prices volatile and artificial. To avoid surprises, stay on the sidelines. True, but the plot is not necessarily working out as expected.

One of the chief proponents of caution predicted, only a week ago, that the FTSE 100 index would end the year between 5,200 and 5,500. After yesterday's surge in London and on Wall Street, the Fomies seems more likely to return to the 6,000 level that it briefly breached back in April and again in July, and which bulls pencilled in last Christmas as a reasonable target for the end of 1998.

Yesterday's price gains were not an aberration of thin markets. The volume of share trading in London was more than respectable for the time of year. Unfortunately, that does not mean it was a fair reflection of prospects for the new year. Fund managers have a collective interest in pushing prices as high as possible at

the end of the year to flatter their performance figures. Not that they would collude in such dastardly behaviour. Events do not always suit that interest anyway. But it is salutary to remember that the Tokyo market peaked amid much back-slapping and mutual congratulation ahead of the 1990 new year festival, only to sink for most of the succeeding nine years.

Today, optimism in the world number two economy is muted. The Nikkei index has fallen by another seventh this year, after a surge of misplaced hope in January gave way to realisation that depression is hard to shake off.

The International Monetary Fund put recent relief at bank reform and tax handouts in perspective yesterday when it revised down its already cautious forecast for the Japanese economy. After a bigger than expected drop of 2.8 per cent in 1998, the IMF now expects Japan's output to shrink by a further 0.5 per cent next year, instead of expanding by a similar amount.

The US, UK, and continental Europe are in much better shape, thanks to decisive interest

rate cuts made in belated response to the Asian slump. The world economy should grow at 2.2 per cent next year, says the IMF, which portends a dull time for advanced economies rather than recession.

The UK is still the country most at risk of sliding into reverse. So if share prices are to progress in the new year, investors will have to shrug off a hailstorm of bad news.

High street figures flatter to deceive

Retailers cannot kick customers they have not got, so yesterday, to vent their fury at the miserable level of spending in their shops, they aimed a nasty blow at the solar plexus of the Office of National Statistics instead.

Having already been floored

with a rain of punches from the Treasury Select Committee over its dubious earnings figures, the ONS was an easy target. Its estimate that November's retail sales were 2.5 per cent higher in volume terms than the previous year had brought shrieks of anger from the stores, so far removed from the reality did these figures seem to be. Ratcheting up the insult, the ONS estimated that, in value terms, the growth was even higher in November, at 3.1 per cent. With the stores being forced to slash their prices to drum up any business, this official indication of widening margins seemed farcical.

The British Retail Consortium waited for the weekend to pass before launching its attack on the figures. Had the longed-for pre-Christmas splurge come on Saturday and Sunday, the chances are that the BRC would have kept its counsel; the fact that it was still in filthy mood on Mon-

day indicates that the tills were not swamped.

But the ONS figures and the BRC experience may not be quite as hard to reconcile as they first appear. The ONS figures are drawn from far beyond the high street. Home shopping, including those direct mail advertisements in magazines, are included, as are regular street markets. While the West End may not have been packed on Sunday, the craft stalls throughout the country were doing a great trade in handmade ceramics and jewellery at a fraction of the store prices.

This is not to say that the public is on a spending spree. People are spending cautiously and the level of spending is below that of earnings growth. (This assertion has to rely in part on the ONS earnings figures, sadly so unreliable that they have not been suspended, but the gap looks clear.) Yet what should be causing the

store's more concern than the ONS statistics is the drift of sales away from them to a new breed of retailer. The Internet bookshop and self-employed potters will have provided many a Christmas present this year even though they do not pay a subscription to the BRC.

Charlene declares chandelier war

It spits should be on the alert for a petite, mouse-like but dynamic American lady. If they see her buying up customers' sweaters, chandeliers and Tasmans as if there is no tomorrow, we are probably headed for a trade war.

In America, Charlene Barshel, the US Trade Representative, has already fallen foul of her own Customs for importing excessive numbers of Chinese-made Beanie Babies, then briefly fashionable toys. The embarrassment was swiftly explained as a misunderstanding. There seems little hope that the long-running EU banana saga will be as easily resolved. Central American ha-

nana producers have a good case against EU preference for Caribbean ex-otomies. But the US has no real standing in the debate and has been reduced to claiming, on behalf of affected US multinationals, that this is a service trade issue.

An absurd retaliatory list of physical imports has been drawn up and threatened with 100 per cent tariffs. It is enough to make even the coldest EU citizen become feline. A response targeting, say, Californian fruit and wine would play well in France and cause US growers to ask why they were fighting the chandelier war for banana barons.

None of which will help poor banana farmers on either side.

Making a meal of it

PHOTOBITION's offer for Wace will have come as a surprise to those investors who may have been tempted to sell the stock after the company's recent insistence that it was not in bid discussions. In Takeover Panel parlance, a shared meal at Wace headquarters, and five separate telephone conversations do not, apparently, amount to being in bid discussions any more than Sir Bob Reid's chats with potential suitors equated a bid approach for Secur-Investor, may find the semantics confusing — and costly.

Firms accused of 'TTG share fiasco' escape rebuke

By FRASER NELSON

THE seven City firms accused of mishandling Thomson Travel Group's £1.7 billion flotation have all escaped without any rebuke after a six-month Securities and Futures Authority investigation.

The SFA said yesterday that it had decided to take no action against Warburg Dillon Read, which co-ordinated the offer, Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, TTG's advisers, or the five share shops that dealt with private investors.

The firms stood accused of turning the affair into a fiasco, where applications were filed before the deadline but rejected because they were processed too late.

Warburg Dillon Read, the investment banking arm of the United Bank of Switzerland, was criticised for delivering prospectuses late and appointing too few share shops to handle the offer.

It shared a fee of up to £51 million with three other advisers.

The SFA said its investigation "did not reveal any matters which will give rise to disciplinary action" — even though 960 complaints and inquiries were lodged.

It has instead decided to "consider whether guidance to firms on aspects of the flotation of new shares is appropriate."

The Share Shop, which was also under investigation, said: "We had not seen anything like this since privatisation. There was a huge response, but everyone acted with due care and attention."

Thomson shares floated in May at an issue price of 170p and reached a high of 199p. However, the levels of outstanding complaints dropped sharply to 40 after the summer's stock market downturn

when the shares bottomed at 107p. Yesterday, the shares closed up 34p at 148p.

The offer attracted one million responses — five times the number anticipated. The large response was helped by the offer of joining TTG's Founders' Club, whose members enjoy a 10 per cent reduction on holidays.

Bardays Stockbrokers, one of the five share shops in the float, has already apologised for sending out incorrect information and promised to compensate investors for any losses.

TTG itself offered everyone who registered for the public offer, honorary membership of its Founders' Club.

NatWest Stockbrokers, Skipton Building Society's dealing service, and Hargreaves Lansdown stockbrokers were the other share shops under investigation by the inquiry.

CRH pips Austrians to control of Ibstock

By PAUL DURMAN

CRH, the Irish building materials group, has snatched control of Ibstock, the UK brick-maker, from under the nose of the Austrian raider that built up a 29.8 per cent stake in it in October.

In an audacious move, CRH and its adviser, Dresdner

Kleinwort Benson, yesterday acquired a 50.7 per cent stake in Ibstock from institutions that included M&G, Mercury Asset Management, Fidelity, and Threadneedle.

CRH's offer of 70p a share is a 22 per cent premium to Ibstock's closing price, and values it at £326.4 million.

It is highly unusual for insti-

tutions to agree to sell at the outset of a possible contested bid. Waterbury, the Austrian bricks giant that built the 29.8 per cent stake in Ibstock, was not available for comment on how it intended to respond.

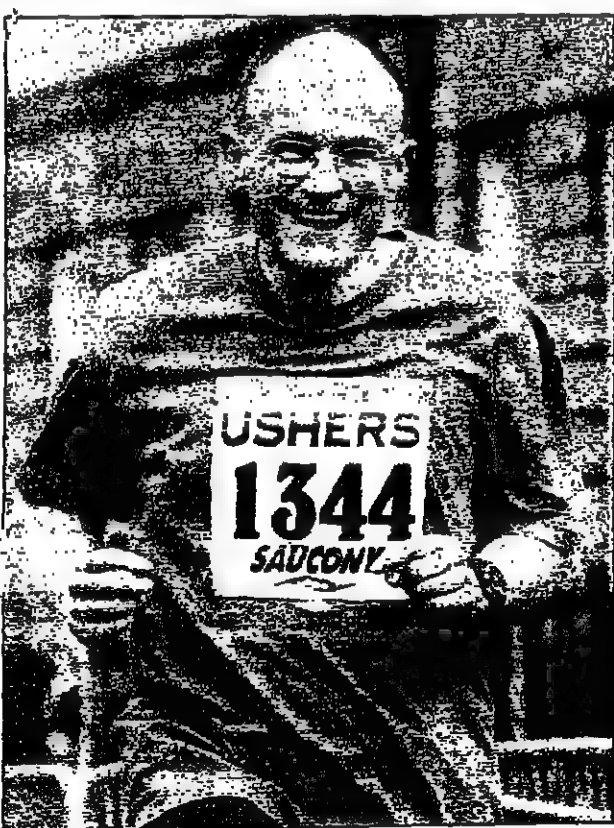
Philip Morgan, Ibstock chief executive, said a year after becoming satisfied that the Austrian group, the world's

largest brick company, had no intention of making a fair offer for the rest of Ibstock's shares. He said that to have let a competitor have significant influence over Ibstock "would be detrimental for our employees and value-destroying for our shareholders".

Wiemerberger paid 10p a share for the stake it bought

from Brierley Investments. Ibstock and its advisers believe the Austrians hoped to pick up the rest of the company cheaply at its share price drift.

CRH already distributes some Ibstock products in the UK and the US. The acquisition will give CRH leading positions in clay bricks in these two markets.



Staying power: Jon Moulton in an Ushers-sponsored road race

Ushers falls to Alchemy at third go

THE STAYING POWER of Jon Moulton was rewarded yesterday when his venture capital firm, Alchemy Partners, snapped up Ushers of Trowbridge, the Wiltshire brewer, at the third attempt (Dominic Walsh writes).

Four months ago, Ushers announced that talks with four separate parties — including Alchemy — had been called off over price. A second attempt in October, at a recommended price of 117p a share, foundered on the rocks of "turbulent financial markets".

Now, Alchemy — acting through a new buyout vehicle called Rhesus — is to take Ushers private at a reduced price of 112p a share, valuing the group at £107.8 million. The directors and Andrew Green, the company secretary, will share £6.2 million.

Tempus, page 24

Ford to buy main UK dealership

FORD is to create its first vertically integrated car dealership after agreeing a £28.8 million cash takeover bid for Dagenham Motors, its main UK distributor (Fraser Nelson writes).

Almost two months since it first declared its interest, Ford will buy Dagenham through a joint venture with Jardine Motors — the second-largest Ford UK dealership.

The enlarged company, taking in Jardine's Polar and BPW dealerships, will directly control 7 per cent of all Ford sales in the UK.

David Philip, Dagenham's chairman and managing director, will collect £2.03 million in cash by selling his shares at the agreed price of 160p apiece. Mike Rubbert, service and bodyshop director, will get £362,000 from selling his shares. Neither is expected to keep his job.

Wace faces £40m Photobition bid

By FRASER NELSON

WACE, the printing group, yesterday stumbled into what may be the final chapter of its chequered history as the rival Photobition made a £40 million hostile takeover bid (See Commentary, this page).

Eddie Marchbanks, Photobition chief executive, said he wanted to capture Wace's US operations and to build a pan-American imaging empire based in New York.

The offer comes three days after Wace assured investors that it "is not in discussions with any party that may lead to an offer". The Times had earlier reported that a bidder was preparing a £40 million offer.

Wace yesterday rejected Photobition's bid as "inadequate" and insisted that it had not been approached beforehand.

Mr Marchbanks said: "I had lunch with the [Wace]

chief executive [Stephen Puckett] three weeks ago. We were all astounded when we saw that statement."

In New York, Photobition trades under its newly acquired Katz brand and Wace trades as Seven. Both prepare adverts for the media, and poster displays for exhibitions.

Wace admitted that Mr Marchbanks made contact on five occasions, but said there was no "approach" as defined by the Takeover Panel.

Wace shares, which have fallen 85 per cent in two years, rose 10p to 51p on Photobition's 50p-a-share bid. A paper alternative values the shares at 52.1p. Photobition will fund the deal by raising £69 million via a rights issue at 228p. Its shares fell 1p to 239p.

Tempus, page 24

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Asda finished 6½p better at



A downgrading by Lehman Brothers, the US securities house, failed to rock BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*. steady at 464½p. It has slashed its profit forecast for 1999 from £144 million to £126 million.

Year	Number of people (millions)
1980	5,500
1985	5,650
1990	5,800
1995	5,950
2000	6,100
2005	6,250
2010	6,350
2015	6,400
2020	6,400

FTSE 350
Financial Index

1998

F M A M J J A S O N D

3,000 3,500 4,000 4,500 5,000 5,500

is the fourth-largest regional publisher in Britain. It has come down from a peak of 250p and is rated as the preferred "buy" in the sector.

"It performed very robustly during the last downturn due to the high quality of its portfolio and management team," says Ms Stewart.

Trinity, unmoved at 40 1/2p, is a big player but appears fairly valued. Newsquest, steady at 235 1/4p, has the biggest exposure to advertising, but has fallen a long way already.

cent 2002 shed 15p at £107.19.
NEW YORK: US shares stormed higher as the "Santa Claus rally" came to Wall Street, trumping concerns about President Clinton's impeachment. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 157.31 points to 9,060.94.

Black's Leds	214 $\frac{1}{2}$	-	8	-	3.5
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The tricky state of high street sales has meant most publicly quoted retailers have spent the autumn giving warning on future profitability. High street weakness has unsurprisingly, a knock-on effect on the size and reliability of Peel's rental income flows.

The stock market scribbles

Centre, the problems facing Peel are not peculiar to it. Many property companies are feeling the pinch and those with significant retail square footage — like Peel — have special reason to be nervous.



warm lager. Given the lack of interest in small cap companies, Ushers should probably never have floated. Just eight months after its flotation at 110p in March 1997, it had to issue a profit warning.

But this bid is a case of

ican digital imaging empire, so there is every chance that a higher bid will emerge from the US. The Photobition offer is a tasty one but there could be better to come.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

100

Dec 21 Saturday	Dec 18 Wednesday	Dec 21 Saturday	Dec 18 Wednesday
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35%	35%	35%	35%
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IBM	120	120	120
Intel	110	110	110
Microsoft	100	100	100
Oracle	90	90	90
SAP AG	80	80	80
Siemens AG	70	70	70
Software AG	60	60	60
Telecom Italia	50	50	50
Telefonica	40	40	40
Telekom AG	30	30	30
Telekom France	20	20	20
Telekom Germany	10	10	10
Telekom Italy	5	5	5
Telekom Japan	4	4	4
Telekom Korea	3	3	3
Telekom Spain	2	2	2
Telekom UK	1	1	1
Telekom USA	0.5	0.5	0.5
Telekom Canada	0.4	0.4	0.4
Telekom Australia	0.3	0.3	0.3
Telekom Brazil	0.2	0.2	0.2
Telekom India	0.1	0.1	0.1
Telekom China	0.05	0.05	0.05
Telekom Russia	0.04	0.04	0.04
Telekom Mexico	0.03	0.03	0.03
Telekom Argentina	0.02	0.02	0.02
Telekom Peru	0.01	0.01	0.01
Telekom Colombia	0.005	0.005	0.005
Telekom Venezuela	0.004	0.004	0.004
Telekom Ecuador	0.003	0.003	0.003
Telekom Bolivia	0.002	0.002	0.002
Telekom Paraguay	0.001	0.001	0.001
Telekom Uruguay	0.0005	0.0005	0.0005
Telekom Chile	0.0004	0.0004	0.0004
Telekom Argentina	0.0003	0.0003	0.0003
Telekom Peru	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
Telekom Colombia	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Telekom Venezuela	0.00005	0.00005	0.00005
Telekom Ecuador	0.00004	0.00004	0.00004
Telekom Bolivia	0.00003	0.00003	0.00003
Telekom Paraguay	0.00002	0.00002	0.00002
Telekom Uruguay	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001
Telekom Chile	0.000005	0.000005	0.000005
Telekom Argentina	0.000004	0.000004	0.000004
Telekom Peru	0.000003	0.000003	0.000003
Telekom Colombia	0.000002	0.000002	0.000002
Telekom Venezuela	0.000001	0.000001	0.000001
Telekom Ecuador	0.0000005	0.0000005	0.0000005
Telekom Bolivia	0.0000004	0.0000004	0.0000004
Telekom Paraguay	0.0000003	0.0000003	0.0000003
Telekom Uruguay	0.0000002	0.0000002	0.0000002
Telekom Chile	0.0000001	0.0000001	0.0000001
Telekom Argentina	0.00000005	0.00000005	0.00000005
Telekom Peru	0.00000004	0.00000004	0.00000004
Telekom Colombia	0.00000003	0.00000003	0.00000003
Telekom Venezuela	0.00000002	0.00000002	0.00000002
Telekom Ecuador	0.00000001	0.00000001	0.00000001
Telekom Bolivia	0.000000005	0.000000005	0.000000005
Telekom Paraguay	0.000000004	0.000000004	0.000000004
Telekom Uruguay	0.000000003	0.000000003	0.000000003
Telekom Chile	0.000000002	0.000000002	0.000000002
Telekom Argentina	0.000000001	0.000000001	0.000000001
Telekom Peru	0.0000000005	0.0000000005	0.0000000005
Telekom Colombia	0.0000000004	0.0000000004	0.0000000004
Telekom Venezuela	0.0000000003	0.0000000003	0.0000000003
Telekom Ecuador	0.0000000002	0.0000000002	0.0000000002
Telekom Bolivia	0.0000000001	0.0000000001	0.0000000001
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Telekom Uruguay	0.00000000004	0.00000000004	0.00000000004
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Telekom Argentina	0.00000000002	0.00000000002	0.00000000002
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Telekom Venezuela	0.000000000004	0.000000000004	0.000000000004
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Telekom Uruguay	0.0000000000005	0.0000000000005	0.0000000000005
Telekom Chile	0.0000000000004	0.0000000000004	0.0000000000004
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Telekom Peru	0.0000000000002	0.0000000000002	0.0000000000002
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High time for the cobbler to repair his children's shoes

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TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Division of:	5%	3%
206,9522	-0.0438	2.14
207,5494	+0.0193	1.98
133,6265	+0.0071	1.96
231,0263	+0.0266	1.91
214,4243	+0.1238	1.90
222,2075	+0.0028	1.95
197,1727	+0.1171	1.97
710,8333	+0.1189	1.97
208,5981	+0.1072	1.99

710	45	1.9	31.0		
301	1	0.8	11.2		
97	1				
178	5	17	23.1		
40	5	12.1	7.9		

Source: FT Information.

* Prices at completion. 1 Ex demand; 2 Ex reserve.

Source: FT Interpersonal
 # Price at announcement, † Ex dividend, ‡ Ex scrip, ▲ Ex rights issue, ▼ Ex alt, & Ex capital distribution, * Source in report issued, . No significant gain. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 index

VISUAL ART: In Christmas week Richard Cork explores one of the most moving Nativities produced in the Renaissance

Laughter of the Innocenti

When Filippo Brunelleschi was invited to design Florence's Innocenti Hospital in 1419, he made sure that the result heralded the momentous advent of an architectural rebirth. For the first Foundling Hospital in the world was the earliest building to apply the new classical ideas to the Tuscan Renaissance style. While he remained faithful to the Gothic tradition in his dome for the city's cathedral, Brunelleschi effectively inaugurated the Renaissance in the Piazza SS. Annunziata near by. He made every effort, in the hospital facade, to let the Italian heat and light penetrate its graceful colonnaded structure. Modest and companionable, the Innocenti has an inviting aura wholly at one with its pioneering purpose.

Established to care for infants "deserted by their parents contrary to the law of nature", the building gains enormously in symbolic value from the loggia that Brunelleschi provided behind its slender Corinthian columns. By opening the Innocenti out into a great city square, he implied that it should not be regarded as a home for shameful outcasts. Instead of finding themselves shunned by society, the foundlings were given a sun-filled gathering point where Florentines could gaze on the steps and savour the life of the city around them.

This air of welcome is confirmed by the celebrated coloured terracotta medallions installed around 1487 in the spandrels of the colonnade. Andrea della Robbia, who produced a figure of a swaddled baby for each medallion, made them enrich the meaning of the building. Another sculptor might have disrupted the Innocenti's refined design, but della Robbia reinforced its commitment to the care of the children in its charge. Far from producing sculptural embellishments so neutral that they pass unnoticed by anyone entering the Innocenti, he made his medallions declare the building's aim in a robust and open manner. The infants' outstretched arms must have seemed to offer a warm-hearted greeting to their flesh-and-blood counterparts as they approached the hospital.

The chronic financial troubles that afflicted the Innocenti for a while might have led some visitors to conclude that the "terracotta babies", as they are called in a record of pay-

ment, were holding out their arms to plead for generous donations. But the truth is that their gestures are ambiguous, encompassing both affirmation and melancholy. Their most prominent and positive meaning was memorably defined in E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View*, when young Lucy Honeychurch wanders through "those grey-brown streets" to the great Square of the Annunziata and comes upon the medallions with "those divine babies whom no cheap reproduction can ever stale. There they stood, with their shining limbs bursting from the garments of charity, and their strong white arms extended against circles of heaven. Lucy thought she had never seen anything more beautiful."

But the infants' outspread arms carry a suggestion of suffering as well. Like many images of the Christ child in Renaissance paintings, with their prophecies of the Crucifixion to come, they convey the pain of martyrdom as well as the joy of birth.

Inside the Innocenti, now preserved as a museum for the treasures it contains, the infant Christ appears at His most blithe. Luca della Robbia, the oldest and most impressive of the family's three sculptors, made a delightfully intimate enameled terracotta group called *The Madonna of the Innocents*.

"The images convey pain as well as joy"

Although smaller than Andrea's babies on the facade, it makes a virtue out of modest dimensions by presenting the relationship between mother and child with the utmost freshness. Dignified she may be, but the Virgin's chubby features denote a very young woman who has no intention of stressing her divine authority in an aloof manner. On the contrary, she seems a simple, approachable individual, unfettered even by a halo. The hood defining an oval around her face is graceful enough to provide the madonna with an aura after all, and the small rose brooch attached to the cloak at the base of her neck is more captivating than a thousand elaborate jewels.

The baby held familiarly in her arm enjoys a close rapport with his mother. He appears quite naked, and leans against her body with conspicuous relaxation. Even though he holds out a scroll announcing that "I am the light of the world", there is nothing didac-



Images of the Innocenti: left, Ghirlandaio's *The Adoration of the Magi*; right (above and below) Luca della Robbia's *Madonna of the Innocents* and Andrea della Robbia's *Innocent Child*

tic or sanctimonious about His stance. The holy child brandishes the inscription with disarming playfulness, pointing at the words and yet managing to imply that they convey a meaning as festive as a welcoming banner at a party.

The prior of the Innocenti subsequently ensured that his institution continued to employ artists with the most scrupulous care. In 1488, soon after the installation of Andrea's medallions, he drew up a detailed contract for a large altar panel by Domenico Ghirlandaio. Astonishingly well-preserved, *The Adoration of the Magi* still hangs there today as the

finest work of art commissioned by the hospital. Ghirlandaio, one of the leading artists in late quattrocento Florence, fulfilled his contract to the letter. Preserved in the Innocenti archive, the document was drawn up by "the Jesuite brother" Fra Bernardo di Francesco. It insisted that Ghirlandaio should "colour and paint the said panel all with his own hand in the manner shown in a drawing on paper with those figures and in that manner shown in it, in every particular according to what I, Fra Bernardo, think best... and he must colour the panel at his own expense

with good colours and with powdered gold on such ornaments as demand it."

The contract's zealous attention to quality and materials alike received its reward in the final painting, where Ghirlandaio produced an exceptionally rich and elaborate interpretation of the Adoration theme. The Innocenti's function was prominently acknowledged, doubtless at Bernardo's bidding, by the inclusion of two children kneeling in prayer at the forefront. Both seem to be protected by the voluminous robes of the figures

near by, and one bearded magus draws attention to the infant in his charge with the wave of an avuncular hand. As if in response, the other magi leave a space between them that enables the child to look past the cluster of meticulously painted flowers and see the Virgin and offspring beyond.

More formal than their counterparts in Luca della Robbia's sculpture, they are nevertheless flanked by the stable's earthbound animals rather than ethereal saints. Both mother and son raise their hands to bless the awed figures gathered eagerly around



them. The central magus is so overcome that he leans forward, clasps the Christ child's foot and kisses His toes. But the spirit of beneficence permeating the central group is contrasted with an agitated scene beyond. There, the luminous serenity of a Tuscan landscape is violated by the massacre of the innocents in all its brutality and despair. Mothers scream and clutch their babies as the soldiers' swords descend, and several infants are already left to die on the ground like the foundlings so often abandoned on the streets of Florence.

By taking the unusual step

of incorporating this earlier biblical episode in the altarpiece, Ghirlandaio and Bernardo emphasised the danger threatening any foundling who failed to find a home in an institution such as the Innocenti. Its role is affirmed above all by the building above the Virgin and her sacred, newborn charge. Nobly proportioned pillars rise up to a roof where singing angels hover on clouds. The notable sturdiness of this structure, coupled with the placid waters of the lake it frames, implies that shelter is available for every unwanted child who needs support, protection and sustaining love.

AROUND THE GALLERIES

'TIS the season not only to be jolly but to turn, as every year, towards Chris Beetles in search of originals by classic British illustrators. On the walls of the Ryder Street gallery are some 700 drawings and watercolours. A lot of them, in consequence, are quite small: there are, for example, some delicious but virtually microscopic Kate Greenaways. This year's show, the seventeenth, seems to place a bit more emphasis on contemporaries, but that is fine, since there is no lack of artists born in the fifties, such as Paul Cox, Emma Chichester Clark and Simon Drew, who keep up the good old traditions with gusto. There are also some amazing backhairs and fine selections of old Beatles standbys like Heath Robinson and E.H. Shepherd.

8810 Ryder Street, SW1 (0171-839 7551), Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, until Jan 22

■ THERE is a slightly nursery-rhyme atmosphere surrounding the Christmas show at the Boundary Gallery — perhaps because of its whimsical title, *The Potter, the Painter and the Cut-Out Maker*. The potter is Ying Yeung Li, a British-trained Chinese painter and photographer with a fine taste for the grotesque and a disregard for the genteel conventions. The painter is a Swede, Hilda Wängdahl, whose abstract work hovers ever on the verge of representation, since she gradually lets a hint of a human figure slip in among the vivid patterns of colour. The cut-out maker is Mervyn Charlton, whose new works are like figures and objects taken from his mythologising canvases, but painted on thin sheets of metal and then cut to shape, so that they free-hang happily on the wall.

98 Boundary Road, NW8 (0171-624 1126), Wed-Sat 11am-6pm, until Jan 9

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR



Daniel O'Donnell: uncool and loved by millions

Smelling sweet

It has been a good year for UB40. The well-received release of *Labour of Love III*, the last in the series of covers compilations, hauled the Birmingham band out of a career slump which at one stage saw several UK shows cancelled because of poor ticket sales. In Britain, at the sold-out penultimate date of an extensive tour, it was hard to believe that UB40's fans had ever strayed. From the instant that the ten-strong outfit appeared the audience cheered and swayed as though at a rowdy family get-together.

Perhaps to underline their turnaround in fortunes, UB40 began with *Come Back Darling*, the new album's debut single, which became a surprise Top Ten hit in early autumn. A Johnny Osbourne cover, the track is typical of the group's most recent material, which eschews popular influences in favour of roots reggae. Most of the crowd — a predominantly white mix of twenty and thirtysomethings —

Warm as winter drawers

In less politically correct times, the 37-year-old Irish balladeer Daniel O'Donnell would have been called the housewives' favourite. His fans have probably never heard of Massive Attack or Fatboy Slim. In fact, they mostly don't even go into record stores at all. O'Donnell's albums tend to get slipped into the supermarket shopping trolley along with the catfood. He shifts huge quantities through QVC, the television shopping channel. His fan club offers tea-cozies and oven gloves decorated with his clean-cut features. As a marketing operation it is probably without parallel.

His audience on the first of two sold-out nights at Wembley was 90 per cent elderly and adoring women and he clearly had a unique rapport with them: O'Donnell prides himself on his relationship with his fans. After every concert he will spend a couple of hours posing for photographs

sang along to every line. By the second number, *Homey Girl*, everyone was at it. Half an hour into the show, frontman Ali Campbell — who formed UB40 with his guitarist brother Robin two decades ago — introduced a very special guest. Jamaican legend Ken Boothe, one of the band's biggest influences, stepped up to duet on *Crying Over You*, a track on *Labour of Love III*. He would later reappear to contribute to *The Train Is Coming*.

Alongside note-perfect versions of (often obscure) reggae songs written by the likes of Bob Marley, the Melodians and the Mighty Diamonds were a handful of UB40's most commercial moments. International chart-topper *Red Red Wine* and a brass-drenched *I Can't Help Falling in Love* went down a storm.

Once well-known for voicing strong socialist views, UB40 have been mellowed by time and maybe money (more than 20 million albums sold). The only traces of political opinion were an image of Martin Luther King briefly projected on to the backdrop and Ali Campbell's introduction to *Le Galise It*, a pro-marijuana song written by Peter Tosh, an original member of Marley's Wailers. "This deals with a subject very close to our hearts," said the slightly hoarse singer. To judge by the sweet smell inside the venue, much of the audience was of a similar mind.

LISA VERRICO



POP

Television's cover girl

The concept of a music-orientated television show creating an overnight singing star may seem to belong in the era when the Monkees ruled the Earth. But the persuasive powers of the goggle-box have bestowed belated stardom on Vonda Shepard. The New York-born, Los Angeles-raised singer-writer released her first major-label album in 1989, when, aged 26, her résumé included classical piano training and session credits with Al Jarreau and Rickie Lee Jones. But Shepard's career failed to take off until she bought what turned out to be pop's equivalent of the jackpot lottery ticket, the musical role in the hit series *Ally McBeal*.

Even if she had to code cover status on her own *Songs From Ally McBeal* album to the show's star, Calista Flockhart, the weekly exposure on such a ratings winner has added an improbable platinum sheen to Shepard's reputation. It also led on Sunday night to an

hard to recall any performer who has made this vast venue seem more intimate.

He mixed happy-clappy singalongs (*Everything is Beautiful*) with hackneyed weepies (*You'll Never Walk Alone*) and the inevitable seasonal selection. But when he went walkabout, kissing and hugging dozens of maternally types without missing a note, he displayed star quality and the common touch in equal measure. There were dedications for Maud's 79th birthday and for Barbara and Francis's 50th wedding anniversary in a show that stretched over more than three hours. He does lots of requests and he doesn't want to leave out anybody's favourite. It would be easy to sneer at the O'Donnell phenomenon. Easy — but patronising and insulting to an audience that was obviously enjoying its biggest night out of the year.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Empire's-worth of Channel 4 viewers at what Shepard proudly described as her first-ever headlining London show. Nailing her colours to this particular TV mast has required the artist to relinquish some creative sovereignty, and although she recently enjoyed a Top Ten single with her self-composed title song for the series, *Searchin' My Soul*, much of the programme, the album and this show were the stuff of upmarket pop karaoke.

Shepard and her five-piece opened with one of the hidden gems in Smokey Robinson's songwriting jewelbox, *Ask the Lonely*; soon another Four Tops hit, *Walk Away Renee*, was producing shivers — but sensitive as the cover was, they were at the thought of Levi Stubbs's performance on the original.

Shepard's own creations, including *Maryland* from the series and *Lucky Life* from her last solo record, were a different proposition, her strong, confident and soulful voice now applied to songs of the reflective maturity she announced those many years ago.

If the ambience of a top-drawer covers band never quite went away, that was precisely what the punters came for, and by the time the band pumped out *It's In His Kiss* and *Tell Him*, their frontwoman had made the area her very own Shepard's Bush, and the night had become an oversized office party.

PAUL SEXTON

A potter through verse and worse

Spike for Poet Laureate? If the number of people willing to turn out to hear him on a chilly pre-Christmas evening is any guide, he would not lack support. Whether they expected to hear quite so much verse is another matter. The tried and trusted format of "An Evening With..." is usually the cue for a judicious mixture of performance, celebrity chat and anecdote. Although a brief question and answer session emerged at the end, this audience with the father of modern British comedy turned out to be closer to a conventional poetry reading.

"Conventional" being a relative term, of course, as far as he is concerned. Poetry recitals are usually accompanied by funeral silence and warm white wine. Milligan's potted along to the sound of his own infectious giggling as he tripped through nonsense verse, a passing tribute to his old favourite William McGonagall and other pieces constructed with all the stark simplicity of haiku. As befits the author of *Silly Verse For Kids*, his children played a prominent role. His grandchildren too — or "trainee murderers" as he preferred to describe them in his cheerfully exasperated way.

Otherwise his thoughts continually returned to the other end of the cycle of life — death and dissolution. The more sombre material — including distant reflections from the A-bomb era and a memorial to a comrade killed in battle — had a standardised, common-room air to them. When he adopted a mischievous, sideways-on stance, the words began to sing. Whether he was describing a bird crushed by a car tyre on a motorway or his fervent desire to avoid being cremated in Golders Green,



Spike Milligan: Goon fishing for compliments



Spike Milligan: Goon fishing for compliments

we immediately heard a distinctive voice taking flight.

Milligan had dispensed a jovial papal blessing when he made his entrance. Resting in an armchair at the end, he was too frail to make very much of the question-and-answer session. Though the wit still flickered, What did he think death would be like? Much like now, he replied with a weary grin.

Some sturdy stand-up jokes made an appearance, and his Irish ancestry prompted more than one bawdy gem. When a tout demands £200 for a ticket outside a Lansdowne Road rugby international, an indignant Milligan points out that he could buy the prettiest woman in Dublin for that. Ah yes, says the tout, but would you get 40 minutes each way with a band playing in the middle?

CLIVE DAVIS

LAW

How much do we owe Josie and her father?

Critics say the compensation scheme can be mean and unfair. Frances Gibb reports

What price should be put on the death or injury of a loved one? How can someone be compensated for pain and suffering when a relative is the victim of violent crime? In the scale of such tragedies, Josie Russell — left for dead after her mother Lin and sister Megan were bludgeoned to death — rates among the worst. Yet the payments to her and her father Shaun from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority have come under attack.

For losing her mother, Josie was awarded £2,000 a year until she was 18. Later £43,000 was added for childcare. But nothing was included for her father's loss of earnings. Dr Shaun Russell is a lecturer whose basic income was £22,500 a year. He decided to work only part-time in order to look after Josie who needs help with reading and writing. After a media furore, he was awarded £16,490, in total, for loss of income until Josie is 18.

Sarah Harman, the solicitor for the Russells, argues that the present compensation scheme, determined largely by a fixed tariff, is unjust and in need of radical overhaul. "Tony Blair talks about giving people what they want," she says. "First, they want to be protected from crime, but if there is a crime they want people compensated for it. I feel we have a responsibility as a society towards those like Josie and her family."

The tariff-based scheme is three years old and replaced one based on common law principles that allowed for greater discretion. The idea was to bring its £220 million budget under control and make it more predictable. But the broad-brush approach has meant some injustices. Chief of these, Mr Harman says, is that the old scheme — for all its unwieldiness — bore some relation to damages awarded in civil cases.

This is starkly illustrated in Dr Russell's case. He and Josie will receive a second award for their personal injuries. Josie's will be decided soon; it could be £40,000 to cover shock, scarring and brain damage — taking into account her job prospects. Dr Russell received £7,500 for post-traumatic stress. But the tariff provides only one payment, £7,500, for the mental effects of such a trauma lasting more than a year — or a maximum payment of £20,000 for permanent mental disability. There is nothing in between.

"It is hard," Ms Harman says, "to justify the maximum in a case like Shaun Russell's because he is so stoical. What is the justification for assuming that a victim of a crime of violence will get over stress in a year or so, or never recover?"

The gap between what vic-



Josie Russell: Her father, who decided to work only part-time to help with her reading, was awarded £16,490 for loss of income

ON THE ROAD FOR JOSIE

□ Nicholas Baldock, a marathon runner, will run the length of the United States — 3,100 miles — in May to raise money for Josie Russell. Mr Baldock, from Wiford, Herefordshire, says: "I was spurred into action when I heard about Josie's compensation award. Her tragedy touched the hearts of the nation and I am appealing for people to sponsor my run."

Details: Eva Christofis, project co-ordinator: 01943-603 825

drms of a medical or car accident recover in civil courts is evident in other ways: Josie gets £2,000 a year for losing her mother; in a recent civil case, a girl was awarded £22,500 a year for the same loss. Rape is another area: rape by one attacker qualifies for £7,500 — more may be given for post-traumatic stress, although the scheme heavily discounts for second or multiple injuries. But a recent rape case within a private hospital could lead to a payout from the hospital of up to £70,000.

Peter Spurgeon, chief executive of the authority, insists that the scheme is among the most generous, paying out 40 per cent of the world total of compensation to victims of crime. It helps 40,000 to 50,000 people a year, paying from £1,000 to £50,000.

A guilty verdict in the courts against the attacker is not always necessary. There is an appeals system and its criteria are clear. Mr Spurgeon says: "There is no such thing as absolute fairness." He will, he adds, always be debate about what to pay people; but that is for Parliament to decide. "The scheme does not compensate for loss. You cannot put pain and suffering in cash terms and the scheme is not intended to... It is to provide financial support for victims..."

Mr Spurgeon accepts that the old scheme was more flexible. But in some ways the new one is more generous: if a child was murdered, then only the mother could claim a bereavement award and only for a child under 18. Now there is no age limit and a natural father can also claim. A victim of

crime suffering serious brain damage can expect up to £250,000 — in the civil courts. General damages could be half that.

One reason for the huge awards in the civil courts is that they also include amounts for punitive or exemplary damages or other factors. But there is a limit to what the taxpayer can pay. Mr Spurgeon denies as a "travesty of the truth" that Josie's award was increased after media pressure. The first sum was an interim one only, he insists, and there had always been more to come.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has promised a review of the scheme, but no more money. Shaun Russell, meanwhile, is amazingly positive. He has been offered some academic work; and many people have made donations for Josie (which go into a trust fund). "I feel very lucky," he says.

"Josie is improving, but we still have to see how she turns out in the long term. You have to accept that the awards are a token; they are not trying to compensate for the loss of your wife and place a value on that. It is a kind of gesture on behalf of the State. And I am quite happy with that."

The case for banishing M'lud from the Lords

Robert Stevens examines the Pinochet case

The decision of five law lords to overturn their colleagues' earlier ruling — that General Augusto Pinochet could be extradited for his actions when he was the leader of Chile — because of Lord Hoffman's uncharacteristic breach of natural justice is fascinating in the short run. In the long run, the significance is greater. It raises the basic issue of the role of the judiciary and how that needs to be adapted to this Government's commitment to constitutional reform.

In a year the Human Rights Act will be in operation. One has only to look at the Pinochet case itself to appreciate the different perspectives held by members of the judiciary. Yet so far successive governments have resisted

about the role of the Lord Chancellor himself. The United Kingdom is strange in that it has its final court of appeal sitting in panels. The orality of the English trial almost demands it. But who chooses these panels? It is all a little mysterious. *De jure* it is the Lord Chancellor, *de facto* the senior law lord. But supposing Lord Irvine had decided to sit either on the original Pinochet cases or at the rehearing? What if he decides to chair the next Pinochet hearing — and we are running short of law lords? Would this be appropriate? The time may well have come when the Lord Chancellor should cease to sit as a judge.

The Pinochet case highlights another aspect of the separation of powers. The idea of

The final court of appeal should be seen to be independent of the legislature

having the final court of appeal being one of the legislative Houses is itself irrational. In the 16th and 17th centuries two great Lord Chancellors — Lord Cairns, the Conservative, and Lord Selborne, the Liberal — agreed that the time to separate the legislative and judicial bodies had come. In 1873 the Judicature Act abolished appeals to the House of Lords and set up the Imperial Court of Appeals sitting in The Strand. It was only a group of Tory right-wing mavericks led by Sir William Charles, aided and abetted by

The Times, who caused a return

of the final appeal to the House of Lords for the purpose of "dignity". If we are serious about constitutional reform and the separation of powers, it is time that the final court of appeal should be seen to be independent of the legislature. Most important of all, the law lords should not be sitting in a legislative body. It is always said that the law lords do not speak on non-legal matters. It depends what you mean by non-legal. Lord Goffard defended hanging and demanded the reintroduction of flogging in the 1950s. Parker followed suit. In the 1960s and 1970s the law lords, led by Lord Hodson and McMillan, opposed divorce reform. In the 1980s the judges, led by Lord Ackner and Donaldson, offered bizarre reasons for attacking Lord MacKay's efforts to reform the legal profession.

It is useful to have good lawyers in the Upper House. It is useful to have good lawyers in the Lower House, but the Commons has managed to achieve that without having any judges sitting with it. It would be an important constitutional step forward for judges to be banished from any reform of House of Lords.

Dr Stevens is Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, and the author of *The Independence of the Judiciary* (1997).

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Legal DIARY

JUDGES' wives and partners are in for a higher profile if — as Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, predicts — there is to be more media scrutiny of judges' interests and affiliations.

One not averse to using the media is Lady Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice's wife. She is in the vanguard of a campaign for government action on anti-malarial drugs to Sudan after the US bombing of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory. This is said to have destroyed half the country's production.

She told Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday that the Government should look at the problem because it supported

the bombing. Without the supplies, "thousands of people will die," she said.

Lady Bingham has written on the matter to Clare Short, the International Development Secretary.

□ GARETH PEIRCE, the solicitor who has been a leading figure in the struggle to prove that a series of convictions linked to the IRA's terrorist campaign were miscarriages of justice, has made a surprising admission.

Though Emma Thompson played the part of Ms Peirce in the film, *In the Name of the Father*, the movie about the Guildford Four, Ms Peirce told the Home Affairs Select Committee that she has not

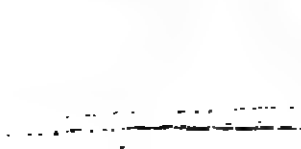
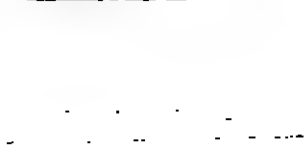
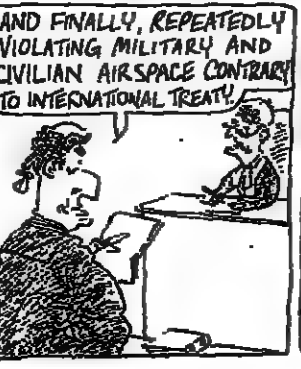
seen the film. That is, perhaps, just as well.

The film-makers took a few liberties with the hallowed traditions of the legal system — such as setting the trial in a semi-circular court and allowing wild cheering and clapping when the solicitor made her appeal to the judge.

□ DAVID PRICE, the solicitor who helped John McVicar to defend — unsuccessfully — a libel action brought by Lord Christie, has lodged a challenge to Britain's libel laws at the European Court of Human Rights. The laws breach human rights, he says; there is no legal aid and the burden of proof is on the journalist. The libel laws, he adds, are based in the 18th century.

QUEEN'S COUNSEL

Steuart & Francis



Computers versus crime

The courts are benefiting from a boost in funds as IT is championed as the launchpad for a new legal system, explains Geoff Hoon

Is a court a place or a service? Could people "go to court" by video-conferencing? Is the Internet an answer to people's need for legal help and advice?

Some of these questions were debated recently at a one-day event organised by the Lord Chancellor's Department. The idea was to discuss plans put forward as part of the Government's information technology strategy for the next five to 15 years — a long-term view of how best to resolve and avoid disputes in the information age.

Exactly how advanced IT might revolutionise the civil justice system is the subject of a recent published consultation paper from the Lord Chancellor's Department. The paper, titled *Civil Justice*, is available on the LCD website www.open.gov.uk/cj — is part of our plans for an IT strategy for the start of the new millennium.

Important steps have already been taken to provide IT support for the justice system. A lot of court systems in time with the needs of our customers and centralised systems, handling bulk processing of routine civil work, have brought real improvements in the quality of service offered to consumers.

There is still a long way to go. It is important to use IT imaginatively. In the LCD several important initiatives are under way in which IT will play a key role in delivering greater accessibility, speed and efficiency to the justice system.

In the criminal arena, the magistrates' and Crown Courts are at the heart of the justice process. A single national system to support the core business of the former and, crucially, to provide electronic links with other criminal justice agencies, is a key aim. A project team will soon finalise the details of a contract for the development of this system —

known as Libra — as a public-private partnership for a continuing programme for the magistrates' courts.

The Crown Court is looking at ways in which technology can speed up the progress of cases using electronic case-flow systems, and to improve the administration of justice. IT could be used to streamline and improve the way in which jurors are summoned and to ensure that they receive better, speedier information about their role. In the courtroom, we want evidence presented electronically, to make trials swifter and simpler, so that jurors can fully understand the sometimes complex nature of the material put before them.

The criminal justice system is an example of how collaboration between agencies could have enormous benefits overall.

We must ensure a design with integration and information-sharing in mind. For this reason, I stress the importance of the integrating business and information systems initiative — a joint venture between the Home Office, LCD and Crown Prosecution Service, covering IT systems and related business processes. It offers an opportunity for a truly strategic approach to the delivery of IT within the criminal justice system.

There will be new IT investment to meet the needs of the criminal justice system as a whole, not simply to satisfy any one agency or organisation. Within the civil system, our priorities are set on delivery of the Government's civil justice reforms. Court staff and the judiciary will be provided with the necessary IT support for handling defended cases. The system will eventually allow users to set, monitor and progress case timetables in the way recommended by Lord Woolf. Other important



Hot chips: IT could provide links between various criminal justice agencies

civil projects are also under way, including further centralisation of bulk processes such as the issue of default summons issued through the provision of electronic data interchange facilities.

It is vitally important to take a long-term view of the civil justice system, and to look at how

IT might fundamentally transform legal services and a citizen's access to justice.

Our paper is the first step. It raises radical possibilities and challenges conventional assumptions in order to provoke stimulating discussion with all users of the system. We hope to achieve an agreed and realistic

strategy on which future plans for the development of technology can be based on the long-term health, success and international reputation of our justice system.

● The author is Minister of State at the Lord Chancellor's Department.

Are you ready for the shake-up of the century?

There is disquiet about reforms to civil justice, due to start in April. Grania Langdon-Down reports

Are lawyers ready for the biggest shake-up to civil justice this century? There are four months to April 26 — or W-Day. That is when Lord Woolf's overhaul of civil justice takes effect. But the Law Society and the Bar fear many lawyers have underestimated the scale of the reforms and the planning and training needed.

The reforms aim to cut costs and delays in civil disputes. There will be one set of court procedures with cases assigned to one of three court "tracks" according to the value of the claim. But the new rules and practice directions will not be published until January and the information technology needed to help judges to control and manage cases will not be ready until at least 2000. In the face of warnings that the "big bang" approach could endanger the reforms, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, says they are pressing ahead with the April 26 start date "with our eyes wide open".

Suzanne Burn, secretary of the Law Society's civil litigation committee, says: "We have taken the view all along that the Government has rushed the reforms. It would not have done any harm to have given six months grace from when everything is published. Hopefully, we won't have too many solicitors ringing up in April saying 'what's this all about?' But some practices will not be ready."

City solicitors Rosling King, City solicitors, is spending £90,000 in lost time training its staff. But Georgina Squire, head of its litigation department, believes "the profession generally is nowhere near ready" — yet the reforms are absolutely revolutionary.

From April, lawyers will no longer control how long cases take to get to trial, with deadlines imposed by the court. Much more work will have to be done before claims are issued because they cannot be amended later. The new standard disclosure rules will be much more restricted than current discovery procedure. It is likely that legal privilege will be lost on the instruction of expert witnesses. The pressure will be to settle, with the emphasis on alternative dispute resolution, and tough penalties for unreasonably forcing a case to court.

Though businesses and insurers welcome

the reforms' aims of cutting costs and delays, King feels there is little understanding of the effects. "A lot of disputes are dealt with in-house before lawyers become involved. Yet if someone inadvertently makes an admission of liability in a fast-track case they are going to be stuck with it and will have to pay the damages that flow from it."

Courts will set timetables and if that means completing witness statements when you are due on holiday, the holiday will have to go. Companies will have to decide who will sign the new "statement of truth" that must accompany claims or defences and who will confirm that all the relevant documents have been disclosed — who will want to be responsible for checking everything? It will be difficult to amend statements later, so much more work will have to be done at an earlier stage, with front loading of costs.

John Lambert, acting head of the Manchester intellectual property chambers Lancaster Buildings, has written a guide on the reforms for his clients. He says judges would have to use their discretion in cases where counsel or barristers were unprepared or risk penalising their clients. "I think the rules may be bent a little at the beginning by sympathetic judges to let the system work."

His advice to law firms and chambers is to embrace the reforms as a good business opportunity. "The law has become so expensive, clients have cut down on legal services. This is a great opportunity to do better."

The reforms have created a boom in training courses and conferences. Professor Nigel Savage, chief executive of the College of Law, says it is providing training for judges and solicitors, and clients, particularly insurance companies, who fund the litigation. Meanwhile, Eversheds, the national law firm, has carried out a survey of companies and public sector bodies which found that the change in culture is a glimmer in litigants' eyes. About 80 per cent said they had seen no improvement in the litigation process; and they did not expect the reforms to cut the amount of commercial litigation in 1999. Three in four expected the same number of business disputes and thought most of them would be settled in court.

We think that the reforms have been rushed



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LEGAL APPOINTMENTS



DEPUTY DISTRICT JUDGES AND DEPUTY DISTRICT JUDGES OF THE PRINCIPAL REGISTRY OF THE FAMILY DIVISION

The Lord Chancellor invites applications from suitably qualified persons to serve as Deputy District Judges in England and Wales from 1 April 2000 OR Deputy District Judges of the Principal Registry of the Family Division in London from 1 June 1999.

Applicants for Deputy District Judge appointments must have held a right of audience in any part of proceedings in any part of the Supreme Court or in all proceedings in the county courts or magistrates' courts for a period of seven years on 1 April 2000. Deputy District Judges are expected to sit judicially for at least 20 but not more than 50 days each year. Appointment is initially for a probationary period of 18 months and will be renewed if that period is completed satisfactorily.

Applicants for appointment as Deputy District Judges of the Principal Registry of the Family Division must have held a right of audience in any part of proceedings in any part of the Supreme Court or in all proceedings in the county courts or magistrates' courts for a period of seven years on 1 June 1999 or should be District Probate Registrars of at least 5 years standing. Deputy District Judges of the Principal Registry of the Family Division are expected to sit for at least 10 days each year. Appointment is initially for a probationary period of 2 years and will be renewed if that period is completed satisfactorily.

Applicants for both posts should normally be aged between 35 and 60.

The Lord Chancellor will appoint the candidates who appear to him to be best qualified regardless of ethnic origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, religion or disability, except where the disability prevents the fulfilment of the physical requirements of the office.

An application form, together with a job description and outline of the criteria for appointment, information about the expected number and location of vacancies and further information for applicants, is available on or after 6 January 1999 by telephoning 0171 210 1464 (an answering machine will operate outside normal office hours) or by writing to:

Applications Unit
(Judicial Appointments Division 2)
Lord Chancellor's Department
Belmore House
54/60 Victoria Street
LONDON SW1E 6QW

When calling or writing, please indicate whether you are interested in appointment (a) as a Deputy District Judge; OR (b) as a Deputy District Judge of the Principal Registry of the Family Division; OR both. Applicants are requested to leave a telephone number where they can be contacted should their details require clarification.

Completed application forms must be returned by noon on Friday 5 February 1999.

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Dancing debate continues in print

THE beauty and elegance of dance sport rivals that of any other, but for the past two decades it has been a relatively closed and isolated world. For an activity that is so photogenic and involves so many beautiful and fit young men and women, the available literature on dance sport has been shockingly sparse. Olympic recognition and a television deal with International Management Group (IMG), however, are forcing change. *The Best of Dancesport 1998* reflects this change.

A superb collection of colour photographs of champions, finalists and those involved behind the scenes at 11 of the main world events this year, the book has been masterminded by Andrew Sinkinson, the British champion, who comes from South London and is a noted exponent of the foxtrot. Specialist dance photographers, including Karen Moos, of Germany, have contributed, with text by professional dancers including Anne Lewis and Bill Irvine.

Bo Loft-Jensen, a former world professional ten-dance champion, writes of the two talking points in January's UK championship in Bourne-mouth. The first question concerned whether the leading Italian couple, Augusto Schiavo and Caterina Arzenito, could maintain their position after a nine-month lay-off because of injury.

Second, there was lively discussion about the dress of Sinkinson, dancing with Charlotte Jorgensen for England. In the early rounds, he discarded his traditional tail suit in favour of a white shirt

DANCE SPORT

by Ruth Gledhill

and black waistcoat, while his partner wore a simple, black cocktail dress. "This is a debate that is in fact still going on, with people discussing the pros and cons of less formal wear, in relation to the general public view of dancesport," Jensen writes.

Most of the pictures show couples in traditional dress, whether for the five "standard" dances — waltz, foxtrot, tango, quickstep and Viennese waltz — or their Latin American counterparts. The dancers are captured in the kind of explosive action shots rarely seen on *Come Dancing*, exhibiting the suppleness of Olympic gymnasts along with a muscular fitness more commonly associated with stars of track and field.

John and Arlene Leach, of *Dance News*, describe the "determined, yet almost ruthless" performance of Marcus and Karen Hilton, of England, as they set about winning their seventh Open British title at Blackpool last May.

The book is being published in four languages — Japanese, German, English and Italian — and 7,000 advance orders have already been received in Japan, where dancesport is bordering on a national obsession.

Other dance books published this year include *Salsa & Merengue*, a step-by-step guide to the dance that is captivating the cast of *The Arsenals*, as well as thousands of young dancers throughout Britain. Paul Harris, a leading London dance teacher and choreographer, traces the origin of the latest Latin American dances to hit the club scene.

□ *The Best of Dancesport 1998*, by Andrew Sinkinson (Bauhaus Co Ltd, £45).

□ *Salsa & Merengue*, by Paul Harris (Sigma Leisure, £6.95).

□ *The Best of Dancesport 1998* (ChrisAnne, £45).

Read all about it: *Times* writers conclude their review of the best of 1998



All smiles: Ian Wright shows his affection for Adams as Arsenal celebrate their title success, but the situation had serious undertones for the club captain. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Adams tops table with brutal honesty

by Nick Szczepanik

There has never been a wider selection of books about football, with entire forests, one imagines, swept away in order to produce the 1998 crop of club histories, player profiles and reference tomes. Even so, two publications hogged the headlines.

Of the two, Glenn Hoddle's *World Cup Story* is of more curiosity value than literary merit, but the same could not be said of the summer's other blockbuster, *Admitted*, by Tony Adams. The Arsenal captain, with Ian Ridley, his collaborator, who also co-wrote 1997's excellent *Tales From The Boot Camp*, has produced an account of a career nearly destroyed by alcoholism that is so honest as to be uncomfortable. Not, then, a little light reading for Christmas, but certainly the out-

standing football book of the year. Bobby Robson, Vinnie Jones and Teddy Sheringham are among big names who have had stories worth telling, but compared to the colourful memoirs of Ron Atkinson in *Big Ron*, they pale. After all, Atkinson has worked for Doug Ellis and Jesus Gil and lived to tell the tales.

A respected football writer once opined — in these pages — that women could not properly report the game because they had not played it. Well, Alison Rudd may not have performed at the same exalted standard as the gentleman in question, but in *Astroturf Blonde*, she captures the love of the game as it is played away from the so-called glamour of international and premier leagues, and which most footballers, of either gender,

will recognise. Needless to say, reference books have abounded, but with new grounds, and existing stadiums altering almost beyond recognition, an updated version of the *Football Fans' Guide* is especially welcome. For anyone on their first visit to Manchester United or Mansfield Town, this is the best directory of how to get there, where to eat and drink before the game, and which clubs' away totems to avoid if possible.

There was also the little matter of a World Cup this year, with France '98 previews and retrospectives choking the shelves.

Bearing in mind England's eventual fate, *He Always Put It To The Right*, by the late Clark Miller, is a timely and

entertaining consideration of the history and psychology of the eternal nemesis of the England team, the penalty shoot-out, but in *One Love*, journalist Daniel Davies and player Robbie Earle tell the story of how a debt-ridden, disorganised national team was transformed into the colourful and dynamic Reggae Boys, who unified a country and captured the imagination before rows over bonuses and team selection threatened to ruin everything.

Brazil disappointed in the final, but two books may banish the bad memories. *Brasil Bom De Bola* is a collection of essays about the roots of the beautiful game on the beaches, streets and even in the rain forests of Brazil, in words, but more impressively, photographs — the one-legged ball-juggler who provides pre-match entertainment at the Maracana, the pitch with a palm tree in one corner of the penalty area, and any number of other memorable images are accompanied by words in Portuguese, French and English from playwrights, novelists, poets and songwriters, with all profits going to help Brazilian street children.

The *Beautiful Team* sets out to find the men of the 1970 World Cup-winning side, arguably the greatest team in history, from Felix to Rivelino (yes, we had been mis-spelling his name for 28 years). Read it and blot out the recollection of their suc-

cessors' abject capitulation at the Stade de France.

□ *Admitted*, by Tony Adams with Ian Ridley (Collins-Willow, £16.99).

□ *Big Ron*, by Ron Atkinson (Andre Deutsch, £17.99).

□ *Astroturf Blonde*, by Alison Rudd (Headline, £14.99).

□ *Football Fans' Guide*, by Janet Williams (Collins-Willow, £9.99).

□ *He Always Put It To The Right*, by Clark Miller (Headline, £14.99).

□ *One Love*, by Robbie Earle and Daniel Davies (Andre Deutsch, £14.99).

□ *Brasil Bom De Bola* (distributed by Art Books International, £33).

□ *The Beautiful Team* — In Search of Pelé and the 1970 Brazilians, by Garry Jenkins (Simon & Schuster, £15.99).

Pedal-power wins the day Scaling peaks and valleys

by Peter Bryan

FIFTY-SIX years ago road-racing in Britain was either on a helter-skelter course to disaster or a stormy ride to success, depending on one's point of view, in a row that was to divide cycle racing for 16 years. Fortunately, success was the outcome, a triumph for the Davids of the sport over the Goliaths.

Road-racing had been banned since the turn of the century, not by an act of Parliament but by the National Cyclists' Union (NCU), fearful of police interference. The union, the country's only organisation with international recognition, reckoned without its outstanding prewar rider who had experienced racing *en ligne* in world championships on the continent.

Percy Stallard decided in 1942 that Britain's wartime roads — little used by civilian traffic because of petrol rationing — provided an ideal opportunity to break the mould.

On June 7, 1942, he organ-

ised the first road-race on public highways between Llangollen and his home town of Wolverhampton — with the agreement of Denbighshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton. (It was advisable, indicated the race programme, "for competitors to carry their identity cards.")

Chas Messenger recalls the trials and tribulations that followed for Stallard's new organisation, the British League of Racing Cyclists (BLRC), in *Ride and Be Damned*. It is a story of intrigue, humour and bitterness that lasted until the NCU offered the BLRC terms in 1958 that led to the amalgamation of the two bodies.

Stallard and his supporters had never given up the fight to re-establish Britain's role in road racing, dating back to

1869 when James Moore, then a veterinary surgeon in Paris, won the world's first road-race between Paris and Rouen.

The early days of the rebel BLRC spawned the first Brighton to Glasgow stage race in 1945, followed by the Tour of Britain, which in 1959 became the Milk Race, of which Messenger was later organiser for eight years.

The book he has produced is not all politics; there is ample coverage of British riders' successes at home and abroad and a wealth of action photographs. Messenger provides an absorbing history of the most turbulent period of British cycling, made all the more interesting by Ivan Dodd's contribution as its designer.

If the book is lacking anything, however, it is a postscript on Stallard who, now 89 years and finding it difficult to walk, is still prepared to offer his views on cycling's deficiencies then and now.

□ *Ride and Be Damned*, by Chas Messenger (Pedal Publishing, £24.95)

FOR a sport in a constant state of flux and with eyes firmly fixed on the future, rugby league's rich, class-driven past tends to be overlooked in its obsessive pioneering. A pity, because history has a way of catching up with the present.

Take Gateshead, where the tentacles of the Super League will reach with a new team next year, but where another venture foundered in the Thirties after two seasons.

This year's literary outpourings are dominated again by the lustre of bygone days, pre-war and Super League. The pick is *Rugby's Great Split*, by Tony Collins, the Rugby Football League archivist, who asks why there are two forms of rugby, and ends up with a celebration of the game's traditions and passions in answering that rugby's schism in 1895 actually defined the class barriers.

Rugby league was shaped in the spirit of defiance and Collins, successfully treading between social history lessons and good storytelling, lends

weight to a truth not universally acknowledged: that little has changed in a century when the game remains wedded to an expansionist theory that has never quite succeeded.

Collins concludes that working-class alienation, persecution by rugby union authorities and geographic restriction moulded the formation of the Northern Union. In that light, was the battle for rugby's soul way back in 1895 ever really won? In terms of establishing itself in Wales, the answer, overwhelmingly, is no.

Tries in the Valleys pre-dates the recent decision by Cardiff and Swansea to withdraw bids for Super League franchises in 1994, but that makes the book more relevant. It opens up with a so-called 20th-century Welsh proverb:

"There are three things not discussed in polite society — politics, religion, and rugby league." Peter Lush and Dave Farrar argue that it is not the game itself that has failed in Wales, but the failure of league people in the North to transplant it.

The Challenge Cup remains the most alluring prize in the game and an illustrated history by Les Hoole does it decent justice with a detailed year-by-year account of the 97 finals. Hoole has also collaborated with Phil Caplan in compiling an excellent pictorial account of 103 years of the Leeds club.

□ *Rugby's Great Split*, by Tony Collins (Frank Cass, £16.50).

□ *Tries in the Valleys*, edited by Peter Lush and Dave Farrar (London League Publications, £14.95).

□ *The Rugby League Challenge Cup*, by Les Hoole (Breedon, £14.99).

□ *Images of England, Leeds Rugby League Club*, compiled by Phil Caplan and Les Hoole (Tempus, £9.99).

Fear and fulfilment on the high seas

PETE GOSS feared writing a book about his Vendée Globe campaign in *Aqua Quorum* more than the actual business of racing round the world. Indeed he spoke about it with real dread before he settled down to his task. Yet in *Close To The Wind*, Goss has produced a fluent, amusing and honest book about his action-packed life to date that is hard to put down.

The narrative rumbles along — explosive and all — a cracking pace. His early sailing exploits were tinged with desperation as he sought to establish himself, and he was prepared to break the rules to get ahead. At the start of a single-handed transatlantic race, Goss did not have the money for a radio. In order to pass a pre-start inspection, he wired up a backlight on his broken set to convince officials he had what was required.

After skipping *Hofor Lager* in Sir Chay Blyth's first round-the-world race for amateurs, Goss eventually realised his dream of racing single-handed around the world.

by Edward Gornh

book comes into its own as it gets down to the trials and tribulations of the *Aqua Quorum* campaign and, with the rescue of Raphael Dinielli in the Southern Ocean as its climax, it is a gripping tale.

If you are looking for a memoir of this year's Whitbread Round the World Race, *Risk To Gain*, with words by Mark Chisnell, Magnus Olsson and Anna Drougou and pictures by Rick Tomlinson, is a worthy offering.

The story of Maurice and Marilyn Bailey and how they clung to life for 117 days in the Pacific in 1973 after their yacht sank is one of the greatest of sea survival. The Baileys' account, re-released under its original title, *117 Days Afloat*, is a tale of determination and ingenuity in the face of overwhelming odds.

□ *Close To The Wind*, by Pete Goss (Headline, £8.99).

□ *Risk To Gain*, by Mark Chisnell and Rick Tomlinson (Max Strom Publishing, £29.95).

□ *117 Days Afloat*, by Maurice and Marilyn Bailey (Laurie L. Coles Nautical, £9.95).

Ice-cold tales and statistics

ICE hockey devotees have rarely been so well served for reading matter as they are this Christmas. As usual, there is *The Ice Hockey Annual*, written in its 23rd year. It is always bracing in its coverage of British game with complete statistics of all domestic competitions as well as a detailed review of the year. The only drawback is that there are too many statistical information about individual players.

This data can be found in *Ice Cold Facts*, published by the Superleague. Its layout is untidy, however, and there are some glaring errors.

Iain Stoyler is a comparative newcomer to ice hockey but has quickly become a fan favourite and has written two books. The first, *Seasons To Be Cheerful*, written two years ago, chronicled the development of the British game *A Game of Three Halves*, said-

by Norman de Mesquita

ted British *Ice Hockey's Changing World*, details the arrival of the Superleague and the domination of the game here by foreign players.

Total Hockey is described as 'The Official Encyclopedia of the National Hockey League', a description that does not begin to tell the story because this is the reference book that outstrips all previous attempts to tell the story of any sport.

□ *The Ice Hockey Annual* (published by Stewart Roberts, £9.95).

□ *Ice Cold Facts* (published by the Superleague, £4.95).

□ *A Game of Three Halves: British Ice Hockey's Changing World*, by Iain Stoyler (Mainstream Publishing, £4.99).

□ *Total Hockey*, edited by Dan Diamond (published by the US by Total Sports, \$49.95).

Rare vintage from South Africa provides potent account

FOR all that England ended the international year with an historic win over South Africa, the southern hemisphere takes the honours in literary as well as playing terms. Ever since Dave Gallaher and Billy Stead came out with their magnum opus more than 90 years ago, we have been accustomed to New Zealand's quality output, but it is rare for South Africans to join them.

This year, however, Donald McRae paints his *Winter Colours* alongside Robin McConnell's *Inside the All Blacks* and David Kirk's *Black and Blue*. McRae grew up in apartheid South Africa, became an angry young man at university and left his native country in 1984 to live in England — yet nowhere does he attempt to disguise his love of rugby and passion for the green shirt of the national

team in a work that stands head and shoulders above any rival.

It has been McRae's achievement to strike up a rich relationship with outstanding players of the era, with James Small from his own country, with Josh Kronfeld from New Zealand, but also to put the personalities within the wider context not only of the sport but society.

McRae does not make the mistake of ignoring rugby's backdrop, of crime and violence in South Africa, of economic downturn in New Zealand, of the strains that impact on Northern Ireland, and does not overplay his hand in the same way as McConnell.

The biographer of Michael Jones is also an academic at Massey University who spent three years on the trail of the All Blacks, at home and abroad, winning the confidence of

two notorious scops in Laurie Mains and Sean Fitzpatrick.

In similar circumstances, we might all become a bit too pally and, since one of McConnell's favoured literary devices is the direct conversation, the reader is overwhelmed with nicknames and personal confidences where a certain reserve might help the narrative.

For all that, it is a readable tale of the reconstitution of a winning team. He does accuse the New Zealand Rugby Football Union of being reactive to the problems created by professionalism which, were he to have sampled the effect of so fundamental a change on the northern hemisphere, he might have been slower to do. But his caution-

ary words include quoting from a response by one All Black, which should be a mantra for all young players.

Kirk, the first to hold aloft the Webb Ellis Cup in triumph, was always going to write an interesting autobiography. It loses its way, though, in covering the past ten years: not that Kirk, the former scrum half and All Blacks captain, was playing throughout that period, but one as perceptive and intelli-

gent could have written more on the transition to professionalism.

An honourable mention, too, for *A Season in Stripes*, by Michael Tanner, who recorded life with Leicester during 1997-98. This is not a case of parochialism run wild but the chance to do, at club level, what McConnell did with a national team: Tanner, a former scrum half in Leicestershire during the 1970s, covers in informative manner the period when Leicester, and Bob Dwyer fell out, his sympathies quite clearly with the Australian coach.

Yet Leicester remains one of the few first-division clubs that continues to make its own way financially, for that alone, they deserve study by their peers.

□ *Winter Colours*, by Donald McRae (Mainstream Publishing, £16.99).

□ *Inside the All Blacks*, by Robin McConnell (HarperCollins, £16.99).

□ *Black & Blue*, by David Kirk (Hodder Moa Beckett, £21.95).

□ *A Season in Stripes*, by Michael Tanner (Mainstream Publishing, £15.99).

□ *Lions of Wales*, by Peter Jackson (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99).

□ *Will Carling — My Autobiography*, by Will Carling with Paul Ackford (Hodder & Stoughton, £17.99).

□ *Life at Number Ten*, by Neil Jenkins with Paul Rees (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99).

□ *Rugby Rebel*, by Alan Tait with Bill Lottman (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99).

□ *Passion in Exile — 100 years of London Irish*, by Peter Bills (Mainstream Publishing, £20).



Three prize men: Arsenal's goalscoring trio celebrate during Sunday's win over Leeds. Bergkamp was this week's leading fantasy scorer. Photograph: Alastair Grant/AP

Champagne and prizes for a fantasy Christmas season

Today we announce the first ON-Target prize winners, opposite. ON-Target, a new competition, for which all Times Fantasy League teams are automatically entered, is an extra way of winning prizes (including cash, sports equipment and games software) in addition to the main, monthly and weekly prizes.

Playing the game is simplicity itself. If your team's points total matches the number or numbers in that week's ON-Target box, you have qualified to enter a draw which could win you £500 cash plus an EA Sports Pack containing, among other items, the videogame FIFA 99 for Playstation or PC.

In other words, if your total team score, according to the player lists printed opposite, comes to either 3 or 14, you should read the instructions on the facing page to find out what to do next.

This extra competition means that you could be a prize winner even if the players in your team have had a disastrous weekend. For example, even if eight of your players spent 90 minutes on the bench and your goalkeeper, Peter Schmeichel, for example, scored minus two, then five points from, say, Robbie Fowler and Trevor Sinclair would give you an overall score of three, keeping you in with a chance of a prize.

In contrast to last week, the Fantasy League week just ended featured few outstanding performances. Dennis Bergkamp of Arsenal was the top points-scorer with seven (three of those by courtesy of a goal scored from a touch by a suspiciously offside-looking Nicolas Anelka).

Manchester United conceded four goals in two home games as they extended their run of games without a win to six, which was bad news for Fantasy League entrants whose teams included any of their defenders, but they will fancy their chances of ending the sequence on Boxing Day when they visit Old Trafford.

On the same day, Chelsea face a

trip to The Dell for a fixture that might have looked straightforward until Southampton saw off Wimbledon with relative ease over the weekend: now, Gianluca Vialli's men may be content with a draw.

Elsewhere, Arsenal host West Ham, who have won on three of their last six visits, while Villa go to Blackburn, where they have won only once in the last 11 matches. Last season, Rovers put nine past Villa without reply in their two meetings.

Fantasy League pages will be appearing as usual on Tuesdays throughout the holiday period, to keep you in touch with the progress of your teams.

Make sure you pay special attention to this week's Fantasy

Quiz. In an unprecedented burst of seasonal generosity and festive spirit, we are offering a prize of a mug of champagne to the winner, and three runner-up prizes of copies of *The Spirit of Football*, a collection of football photographs.

Next week, we will publish player lists updated to include all games played on Boxing Day, but not those played on December 28 (Bank Holiday Monday). New lists affected by the results of games on December 28 and 29, and the name of the winner of the monthly prize for December, will appear the following week, on Tuesday January 5; new ON-Target numbers and a new weekly winner will be announced on both December 29 and January 5.

PRIZES

- £30,000 to the top Fantasy League manager, plus a trip for two to the European Cup final
- £25,000 to the runner-up
- £20,000 for third place
- £10,000 monthly prizes: eight prizes of £1,000, plus £100 of Puma sports equipment
- £500 weekly prizes: 36 prizes of £500, plus £100 of Puma sports equipment
- £1,000 youth prize, plus monthly prizes of a Premiership football shirt
- £500 weekly ON-Target prize

HOW TO ENTER YOUR FANTASY LEAGUE TEAM

Select a team of 11 Premiership players from those listed right. The total value of your team must not exceed £50m and you cannot choose more than one player from the same Premiership club. Your team must be in a 4-4-2 formation with one goalkeeper, two full-backs, two centre-backs, four midfielders, and two forwards.

TO ENTER BY POST Name your team on the entry form, left, in no more than 16 characters. Enter the correct three-digit player codes from the list, right, followed by the players' names. Enter the first three characters of each player's name under the heading CLUB, ie, LEE for Leeds. Also enter the value of each player shown on the list right. Add up the values of the 11 players in your

team and make sure the total does not exceed £50m. Send your entry to the address shown, with a cheque/PO for £2.50 (£10 sterling outside UK or ROI) or your credit-card details. You will get confirmation of your team and your personal identity number (PIN) on receipt of your entry form. Readers under 18 should seek parental permission before entering. They must state their date of birth and indicate if they wish to enter our Youth League.

LUCKY DIP If you would like us to select a team at random for you, please tick the Lucky Dip box on the entry form. Postal entries only.

TO ENTER BY PHONE Call 0640 625 102 (+44 870 901 4209 outside the UK) using a touch-

tone (DTMF) phone and when prompted tap in your 11 three-digit player codes. You will be asked to give the name of your team (no more than 16 characters). You will then be given a 10-digit PIN, make sure you write this down and keep it safe to be able to check your team's progress and make transfers. Calls last about seven minutes. 0640 calls are 60p per minute. Calls from outside the UK are charged at national rates. Calls from payphones cost approximately double.

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Premier: Main Pressing Ltd, PO Box 98, Virginia Street, London E1 6DT

THE TIMES' MAIN FANTASY LEAGUE ENTRY FORM

Submit your entry as soon as possible to maximise your points-scoring opportunities.

FANTASY TEAM NAME (up to 16 characters) _____

LUCKY DIP If you wish to have your team selected by us at random, tick box ☐

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A low-scoring week but more prizes than ever because we can announce the first winners of the new ON-Target competition

And he also strikes a dead ball with the best of them — corner-kicks a specialty. And this week, he is the top *Times* Fantasy League defender.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a soccer player in a Carlsberg jersey, captured in a dynamic pose as if running or kicking. The image is framed by a thick black border.

Anfield Stigma: as a Liverpool defender, Stig Inge Bjornebye is a target for snipers from all levels of punditry. More than 60 caps for Norway tell a different story, and a clean sheet and the assist for Michael Owen's goal on Saturday (worth five points) make him the week's top Fantasy League defender.

1	Paul Clarke	Shabod United	21
2	Tony Mearns	Tony's Terrors	20
3	Sean Eastwood	Corn Brothers	20
4	Robert Anderson	Roberts' Rogues	19
5	Michael Llewellyn	Wormholes & Co	19
6	Sean Morgan	Dr Nor Agam Ref	19
7	Terry Bullen	Don Dick Dron	19
8	Brian Hinchey	Deeds Deans FC	19
9	Terry Bullen	B T's Revenge	19
10	David Edmund	In The City	19
11	John White	Fusegates	19
12	David Young	Deep 10	19
13	I. Samuels	Soprano Mosity	19
14	Thomas Maule	It's All Scars	19
15	Martin White	Grampus Gunners	19
16	James Walsh	Tony Angles	19
17	Paul Taylor	Put Ups	19
18	Ian Finlayson	We Hate Bechlam	19
19	Richard Deane	On The Wagon	19
20	Stephen Marshall	Dorchesterway	19
21	Steve Onger	Lofomotoy No Go	19
22	Nigel Kells	Kelbs Kings B	19
23	James Kelly	The Promis Stars	19
24	Ray Walker	Yeast/Yeast/Yeast/Yeast	19
25	John Weller	Blue & Black Bar	19
26	Don Sharter	Don 5	19
27	Robin Playden	Robins Raiders	19
28	David Smith	Just A Second FC	19
29	Robert Lick	Broken Arrow	19
30	Oliver Chapman	Wegton Rangers	19
31	Scott Reid	Scots Stars	19
32	Mark Brown	Pleasantville	19
33	William Lawson	Throa In Muses	19
34	Stuart Bradburn	Moggy's Farm	19
35	Ian Broadbent	Stn 150	19
36	Jonathan Bewick	Edmo Utd Mangton	19
37	Paul Morton	Bezer's Boyz	19
38	Richard Haggley	Skill Vans	19
39	William Mace	Thames Est B&B	19
40	John Lethouse	Lepeflovamur	19
41	Peter Demery	Solid At The Bac	19
42	Pauline Parnell	Goals R Us	19
43	Andrew Marsh	Lous Rockers	19
44	Nicholas Langford	Eat My Goal	19
45	Richard Vaughan	Grossincompetic	19
46	Aleis Smith	Pomo Flick	19
47	David Perry	Corcoran Ice	19
48	Michael Scott	Middle-shares	19
49	D Osborne	Alldoeswashage	19
50	David Pugh	George P C	19
51	Gordon Croxley	Unky Be Darned	19
52	Murray Macmillan	Super Saddlers B	19
53	Miles Shipley	Mummys' Marvels	19
54	Scotlett	Minus Threat 10	19
55	Pauline Houghton	Getto Ness	19
56	Tim Garber	Tumpknotured	19
57	Ron Alport	Heart Of Glass	19
58	John Bell	Cydonies	19
59	John Bell	Pride Of The Rock	19
60	John Hives	Wicket United	19
61	Dorcas Brampton	Boogioo Dudes	19
62	Wesley Jones	Monday Moaners	19
63	Alan Windsor	Vehesecordist	19
64	James McInerney	Tyraside Army B	19
65	Dorothy Robinson	Do I Need Ovaries	19
66	Sheryl Archer	Globobernia	19
67	Melanie Lynn	Grey Arrows	19
68	Paul Dillman	Shrimogomur	19
69	Tim Stiles	Nemot 20	19
70	Alan Fendley	Teele's Toppers	19
71	Gillian Rose	Oldskiesborough	19
72	Andrew Kawaguchi	Landsidecityam	19
73	David Harrison	Bermies Fleas	19
74	Richard Jones	Super Shippers FC	19
75	Andrew P. Heald	Five Star Fish	19
76	Macdon Angus	W. D. United	19
77	Ben Rimes	Virre Apeacens	19
78	Adam Lohr	Penetrals	19
79	Brian Campbell	Get The Wm B	19
80	Charles Knappes	Saturday Sunday	19
81	Chris Baker	Revolution 1	19
82	Mark Deane	Lawsonians	19
83	Gary Levermore	Alans Snaffles	19
84	David Lawson	Tore-Co Team	19
85	The Gals	On Demand	19
86	Zana Radcliffe	Whodunnit Whiff?	19
87	Tim Dixon	One Paul Byrne	19
88	Stan Parker	The B Team	19
89	Richard Hayward	Random Punters	19
90	Cole Hogg	Enem United	19
91	Richard Lee	Redstart Gulls	19
92	William Bottom	Georci United	19
93	R. Wells	Flagit W	19
94	Tony Barnes	Colour Me Blue	19
95	Kath Davies	penmri St Boys	19
96	Andy French	Lees Eleven	19
97	David Tucker	Alans Alstars	19
98	Wife Niece	Peter 7	19
99		Hotpud Yeddy	19

Plus two others on 175 points

Even if your team only notched up 3 or 14 points last week, you could find yourself considerably better off in time for Christmas

CALL 802-4270
If you don't have a team, or
do have one but want to im-
prove the chance of win-

1209

This week's winners are: Peter Kennedy of Basildon (£500 plus EA Sports Pack); Chris Glover of Chorley; Robert Beaumont of York; Chris Thompson of Sandy, Bedfordshire; and John Barden of Heme Bay (EA Sports Packs); David Walker of Kendal, Neville Emmes of Freshwater, Isle of Wight; Wynne Evans of Shrewsbury; Cailum Shearman of Edinburgh; Tracey Lomas of Learington Spa; Nigel Morrison of Wirral; William Woolley of Sevenocks; David Parmenter of High Wycombe; Chris Taber of Stockport; and Russell, Battle of Isleworth, Middlesex (Rita 91 CQ-Round).

Last week the four players were Richard Dryden, Noel Blake, Stephen Hughes and Michael Owen. Could they possibly be related to John Dryden, early poet laureate, William Blake, Wilfred Owen and the late poet laureate, Ted Hughes?

Other beneficiaries of "boms" assists have been Newcastle's Shay Given, who has set up two goals so far with his long goal-kicking. David James, whose long and accurate throw led to a Michael Owen goal, and Charlton's Sasa Ilic.

However, the main concern for a goalkeeper must be clean sheets — a dying breed over the last few weeks. A low-scoring

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0640 calls cost 60p per minute.
Ex-UK calls charged at national rates

Conversely, Aston Villa have leaked goals in recent months after an impressive start to the season. The first nine games saw seven Villa clean sheets, but the next eight only resulted in one complete shut-out. However, Villa are approaching a relatively easy set of games, and the defence is likely to return to its earlier form.

Perhaps the surprise goalkeeping package of the season is Everton's Thomas Myhre. The Norwegian has kept a clean sheet in exactly

David Seaman. Seaman's usual rival for the top goalkeeping spot, Peter Schmeichel, has not kept a clean sheet in all competitions for some 12 games and disappointed many managers by conceding three more goals this weekend to reduce his points score to exactly zero. Schmeichel himself has not been playing to his usual high standards, but neither has the rotation of defenders at Old Trafford helped his cause. Perhaps it's time Alex Ferguson chose his best defensive quartet and stood by them week-in, week-out. After all, it never did Arsenal any harm.

FOUR LEAGUE TOP 10			
1	Robert Anderson	Robert's Rovers	196
2	Richard Low	Georg United	175
3	Alison Carter	The Plugslopes	174
4	Matthew Forster	Martys-Monsters	174
5	Robert Lick	The Fall Belles	174
6	Ben Gilchrist	Brand 1	173
7	Gran Jevon	Gege	173
8	Caroline Cooney	Spadesia City	172
9	Philip Charles	Crut's Stars	172
10	David Southbank	Tius All Stars	171

Plus three others on 171 points

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a soccer player in a dynamic pose, wearing a jersey with a crest. The player is captured in a moment of intense action, possibly during a match. The image is characterized by its stark, graphic quality, with deep blacks and bright whites, giving it a posterized appearance. The player's jersey features a prominent crest on the left chest. The background is almost entirely black, which makes the player stand out. The overall composition is energetic and focused on the athlete's form and movement.

Steve Lomas features in league-topping Ekuhan Family

Security fears cloud a continent's bid to stage World Cup finals for the first time

Can football risk taking a gamble on South Africa?

In the heart of Soweto, the sound of a ball and the laughter and excitement that follow it recall street football of a bygone European age. It is child's play without fear of being knocked down by cars. We are close to where Nelson Mandela lived before being taken to Robben Island, close to where the 1976 riots began after police shot dead a nine-year-old boy on his way home from school.

Innocence lost: some innocence regained in a game that defied apartheid. Sowetan football accepted whites who dared to cross the colour line and Orlando Pirates, for example, grew out of a Sowetan district where Mandela lived and where Winnie Mandela today has a high-walled, guarded home among her own people. Nearby, a painted sign, "Youth Uprising - Point of No Return" marks the dreadful spot where the late President Mandela acknowledged that the World Cup would spell more hope for seven-decades of his people than rugby, athletics and cricket put together.

As President Mandela prepares to pass on his chains of office, so he appeals to the 24-man Fifa executive committee to grant South Africa the most complete symbol yet of its post-apartheid re-emergence. In Johannesburg last week, Mandela recorded his message for the official bid video and, after discussing the balance between past and future, concentrated on the plea for the new generation.

England, he knows, wants a World Cup for the first time in 40 years. By 2006, Germany will have waited 32 years, Brazil 56. But Africa has never staged the event and, though there are bids from Morocco, Egypt and Ghana, it is South Africa, if anywhere on the Dark Continent, that has the stadiums, communications, hotels and transportation that a World Cup demands.

It also has Mandela's unique sentiment. However, Cape Town had that and still failed 18 months ago to convince the International Olympic Committee that it could safely stage the 2004 Games. South Africa is cursed by more than 30 shootings per day and 17,709 murders in less than a year, so how can it convince the world governing body that it is ready to secure 64 matches over five weeks in 12 stadiums and eight cities?

The point hit home last month when Patrick Rousseau, the chairman of the West Indies Cricket Board, and his wife were robbed at gunpoint outside the Soweto Oval less than 24 hours after arriving in Johannesburg. Apartheid used to be the enemy, now it is crime. At Johannesburg airport the warning is writ large. "Arrive Alive". The signs say. On the highway is the same notice.

Danny Jordaan, a former



Rob Hughes
reports from
Johannesburg,
where even the
support of
Nelson Mandela
has failed to
assure everyone
that the time is
now right

history lecturer, footballer, cricketer, ANC youth activist and political disciple to Mandela, answers. "The man to ask is J.S. (Sydney) Mufamadi, Minister for Safety and Security." Jordaan, now chief executive for South Africa's bid, said. "I just came from him. He is confident. At the Rugby World Cup [in 1995], the athletics [World Cup, in September] and the football African Nations Cup [in 1996] there was no violation of security. You have seen 85,000 packed into the FNB Stadium near Soweto without a single incident."



Support for the bid is loud in places

"Mufamadi will give the guarantee. We have all the law enforcement and intelligence necessary. My view is that when this country returned to the international community the security forces were not able to cope with international crime syndicates based in Africa. The police are beginning to make major breakthroughs and Fifa will see this."

"Under apartheid, we had a police force with no capacity to investigate. They beat you and killed you without trial. We had to engage investigators from outside and we have 2,000 former policemen in jail because they failed to make the transition, some in senior ranks. We are grappling with the situation and gaining ground on organised crime."

Yet, on a casual basis, one met white folk who, born and bred under the Afrikaner system, swear that while Mandela has been a benign face of the ANC, they will emigrate when Thabo Mbeki succeeds him next year.

"I know about apartheid," one man insisted. "I was one of three Jews at a boarding school of 800 Afrikaners. I emigrated to Canada in 1989 but when Mandela became president I came home. My dream was to pass on my skills to young blacks, but they don't want whites teaching. They want to redistribute wealth. I will take whatever I can, legally or illegally, and get out. Just look around you, see the fences, the barbed wire, the guards around our apartments. Who wants to live this way in his own land?"

It is the fear of random crime, rather than a wealth tax, that Joel Stransky cites as the reason he may not go back to South Africa after his contract with Leicester rugby club ends. Trevor Phillips, the former Football Association commercial director who has built up the sponsorships of South Africa's Premier Soccer League, believes that this fear is exaggerated. "I wouldn't have missed the last 24 years for anything," Phillips said. "After the FA bureaucracy this



Youngsters playing at a Soweto school are hopeful that their country can win the race for football's greatest prize. Photograph: Jada Ngwenya

is a godsend. I came here at 55 thinking I was too cynical to get involved in the emotions, but it sucks you in. The African has made soccer his province, his part of South Africa."

"No one will deny there is an enormous amount of crime. It's a challenge to government but, if you analyse it, most of the crime is centred on deprived areas. You won't be exposed unless you go into the townships." Yet Phillips's contract is drawing to an end and he is coming home to England. "No one lied to me. It's time for a black chief executive of the soccer league," he said. "They are taking on a good administrator in Joe Nhleho. The policy of 'affirmative

action" began subtly under Mandela, but there are less patient people around. Lula Xingwana, chairman of the ANC committee on sport, plans legislation to impose black selection in rugby and cricket. The aim is populist; the sportsmen are unmoved. Herschelle Gibbs, one of three black cricketers on the fringe of the national squad, insists: "We want to play because we deserve it, not because of the colour of our skin."

Jordaan shares this commitment to merit. He accepts there is irony in Jojo Havelange expanding the World Cup to make places at the finals for Africans who provided his presidential power base

and putting the tournament beyond the resources of most emerging nations. Moreover, Jordaan swiftly found ways of getting among the Fifa family. Last year he officiated at the world youth championship in Malaysia; now he sits on Fifa's marketing and television committee.

Jordaan said: "Because I know executive committee members personally doesn't mean I have their vote. It gives me opportunities to correct false impressions about our infrastructure. We have more than enough stadiums, rugby stadiums we will adapt for the World Cup. We are expanding the FNB

Stadium to 120,000 seats, we have world-class roads, rail and air. There are more flights from Cape Town to Johannesburg than London to Manchester and we plan to develop inner-city and inter-city public transport for 2000."

The only fear is "the fear of losing the bid". The annoyance is European presumptuousness. "They plunder African players and I'm worried about the social impact," Jordaan said. But when Sir Bobby Charlton and Franz Beckenbauer, working for rival bids, patronise Africa by suggesting that its turn will come "when it has the organisational skills, maybe in 2010", Jordaan retorts: "Europe wants to deter-

mine when they are ready and also when we are ready. They are not entitled to decide when we are ready."

"We have the requirements to meet the World Cup challenge and it's not good for Fifa to have dominance of the game on one continent."

South Africa's cry has the ear of Sepp Blatter, the president of Fifa. Unlike Havelange, who has promised all things to all bidders, he commits himself to Africa — provided that the logistics are met. In 1992 Blatter boldly persuaded Fifa to risk ten Asian qualifying games in Beirut shortly after the ceasefire. Few Fifa members showed up. Those who did had their spirits lifted by the experience of sport helping a country to pleasure after pain.

South Africa is on the edge. It has pioneering vigour, energy, released after repression, but things could get worse before they get better. Its history is older than Britain's, its constitution in its infancy, its road ahead uncharted. Fifa either settles for the safest option (England or Germany) or gambles on the global game.

"It's Africa's Call" is the slogan. The committee of nine Europeans, four Africans, four Asians, four South Americans and one from Trinidad, the United States and New Zealand must choose whether to take that call. If only Mandela was young enough to guide his nation to the end of the line.

THE COUNTRIES WITH THEIR EYES ON THE PRIZE

Bidding for the 2006 World Cup reaches its first official milestone on December 31, the date by which countries wishing to enter the billion-dollar race must lodge a letter of intent to Fifa, the world governing body of football, in Zurich.

The seven letters so far received are from England, Germany, Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Ghana and Morocco. Nigeria has yet to confirm speculation that it intends to bid.

On another dimension, Ghana has suggested a pan-African World Cup, across the vast continent that has never staged the World Cup, and Argentina dabbled in proposing a joint venture with Brazil. However, the 24-man Fifa executive committee, which determines the destination, will not favour another complicated joint bid so close to the 2002 Japan/South Korea World Cup.

It will be one nation, probably from South Africa, Germany, Brazil and

England. The bids — involving enormous political, commercial and logistical commitments — face four subsequent deadlines: by April 30, 1999, the countries must confirm their intent; by July 31 they must produce a complete presentation; by the end of September a Fifa inspection panel will assess the infrastructure; and in March 2000 the vote will decide.

The prize is extraordinary, but so are the demands of organising a 32-nation event involving 12 stadiums capable of seating a minimum of 40,000 with the logistics of travel, accommodation, security, organisation and telecommunications under review. Political and economic stability will help, as will the ability to keep the heads of the hosting Football Association in situ.

TOMORROW

Why Germany remain slight favourites



Post-apartheid South Africa is cursed with violence in the townships

SNOW REPORTS									
Station	Depth (cm)	L	U	Frost	Run to Resort	Off/tp	Weather (Spm)	C	Last snow
Austria									
Kitzbühel	20	65	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-4	21/12	
Obertauern	35	150	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-14	21/12	
St Anton	30	280	Hard	Open	Powder	Cloud	-13	21/12	
Canada									
Lake Louise	90	100	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	-28	16/12	
France									
Alpe d'Huez	32	140	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Sun	-2	20/12
Avoriaz	25	80	Fair	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-7	20/12
Chamonix	40	140	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-4	20/12
La Clusaz	25	80	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-3	21/12
La Plagne	20	100	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-1	21/12
La Tignes	25	100	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-3	21/12
Les Arcs	32	155	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Cloud	-5	21/12
Megeve	46	140	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-2	21/12
Tignes	10	70	Fair	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-7	21/12
Val d'Isère	44	105	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-1	21/12
Valmorel	25	70	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-3	21/12
Germany									
Cervinia	10	130	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-1	21/12
Corviglia	5	20	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fair	-2	21/12
Livigno	13	84	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Cloudy	-2	20/12
Italy									
Gaio	40	40	Fair	Open	Packed	Fair	-6	20/12	
Switzerland									
Crans Montana	5	120	Fair	Open	Artificial	Varied	Fine	-3	12/12
Davos	25	120	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Cloud	-5	21/12
Klosters	5	120	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-5	21/12
Murren	30	100	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-3	21/12
Saas Fee	10	140	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-1	21/12
St Moritz	10	80	Fair	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-1	21/12
Verbier	15	150	Good	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-3	21/12
Villars	20	80	Hard	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-3	21/12
Zermatt	10	90	Fair	Open	Artificial	Varied	Snow	-4	21/12
United States									
Aspen	60	75	Hard	Open	Powder	Snow	-20	21/12	
Deer Valley	70	80	Good	Open	Packed	Cloud	-17	20/12	

http://www.skiclub.co.uk

SAILING

Golding finds silver lining

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

IT CAN all go wrong so quickly when you are single-handed in the Southern Ocean and averaging more than 300 miles a day. But Mike Golding, of Great Britain, on *Team Group 4*, is proving that he is just as proficient at putting everything back together in his Open 60 as he was on his old steel Global Challenge yacht.

Golding is now due south of the western tip of Australia with 2,800 miles still to sail to the finish of the second leg of the Around Alone race at Auckland. The Briton is disputing second place for the leg with Marc Thiercelin, of France, on *Somewhere*, over whom Golding has a ten-hour advantage carried over from the first leg.

Both have followed Giovanni Soldini, of Italy, on *ELTA*, to build a lead of more than 400 miles in the past couple of days, but Golding never planned to cover the erratic Italian, over whom his first-

leg margin is nearly three days. In his latest report, Golding described a sudden onset of chaos on board *Team Group 4* that might have stalled a lesser man for a lot longer than it did Golding. After making a small alteration to his course, the automatic pilots suddenly threw *Team Group 4* into a crash gybe. As Golding was trying to get the sails down, the staysail sheet caught in the main halyard and, within seconds, the main halyard which had pulled out of its mountings and was flogging dangerously on the foredeck with its contents spilling overboard.

"So now it's dark [isn't it always?], I'm in a 60ft yacht, crash-gybed with no working pilots, and sails which I can't get down because they are jammed at the mast and need a winch — most of which is on

the four-kilometre journey to the bottom... to free them," Golding said. "Below, the two rudders are at 45 degrees to each other as the tiller bars slipped. One pilot ram is broken and both pilot reference units, without which the pilots won't work, have been ripped from their mountings. What a mess."

An exhausted Golding spent all night trying to clear it up and get the boat going again. He even managed to jury-rig the broken winch with a cat's cradle of vectran lines to hold it in place. To his astonishment, the next position scheduled early yesterday showed he had moved ahead of Thiercelin into second place.

Alex Bennett has bought Mark Turner's Mini, *Carphone Warehouse*, and will begin his campaign to win the single-handed Mini-Transat race next year in earnest with the Mini-Fastnet, which starts in June.

THE Thailand Masters will slip into abeyance after its staging in March, should the rebellion against the present regime of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) fail at the annual meeting in Birmingham tomorrow.

Sindhu Pulsirivong, a guiding light behind the growth of the game in the Far East, has become so disillusioned with the WPBSA board in general and with Rex Williams, the chairman, in particular, that only a change of power will keep the popular world ranking tournament alive.

Pulsirivong, a philanthropic multi-millionaire, is the chairman of the World Confederation of Billiards Sport and president of the Thailand Billiards and Snooker Association. "If Williams and his supporters remain in control of the WPBSA, there will be no more ranking events in my country. I would be wasting

anytime if I carried on and it's too precious for that to happen," Pulsirivong said. "It seems that if you disagree with Williams, as I have done, you are branded an enemy."

Pulsirivong, who resigned his WPBSA directorship in June after opposing a number of policy decisions, has also been incensed by a recent newspaper article in which Williams allegedly described Steve Davis, a candidate for election to the board, as "clueless and useless". "Davis, in my opinion, is the greatest ambassador the game has had. To try and discredit him is a mindless exercise," Pulsirivong said.

On the table, Mark Williams has emerged as a realistic contender for the world championship after winning the Irish Open title with a 9-4 victory over Alan McManus in Dublin on Sunday.

Williams, who proved his strength of temperament by edging Stephen Hendry 10-9 on a respiteed black in the Benson and Hedges Masters final ten months ago, has incorporated a new depth of tactical consideration. He is the most accurate long potter in the game and completed a century break in each of his five matches in Ireland.

"He can be world champion, and pretty soon at that," Ian Doyle, his manager and head of the Cue Masters stable, said. "Mark has cut out the carelessness which used to plague him and he's developed rhythm."

Williams, 23, who trounced Ken Doherty 5-1 in the quarter-finals and John Parrott 6-1 in the semi-finals before establishing a 6-0 lead over McManus, has now prevailed in four world-ranking competitions. If he retains his Dublin form into the new year that number will quickly swell.

SNOOKER

Revolt threatens Masters

England no closer to solving puzzle

**FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN HOBART**



Lehmann: destructive



Beset by injuries, the Australians could not entirely be blamed, though the fact that Blewett was not used, while Lehmann and Elliott — part-time bowlers at best — shared 12 overs told its own story of a means to an end. The two Englishmen seeking valid scores on their CV's will have had decidedly mixed feelings.

Simon Barnes will judge the champagne-worthiness of entries, which should be sent to
Magic Numbers,
The Sports Desk, The Times,
1, Pennington Street,
London E1 9XX

TELEVISION CHOICE

The 80th anniversary of the first *Tarzan* film is the excuse for Jonathan Ross to take a playful trawl through the past, which now numbers 43 titles, not to mention television versions and a forthcoming Disney animation. Mostly it is a clips-and-interviews exercise, high on anecdote. Tarzan actors also reminiscing include Gordon Scott and Miles O'Keefe, with Johnny Weissmuller's son filling in on his father's Amazon life (and his father's death on his last film, *Maureen O'Sullivan*). In her last interview, footage includes O'Sullivan and Weissmuller swimming in the nude, a scene too far for the 1934 censor. Only at the end do we get an attempt to explain Tarzan's appeal, from a possibly unexpected fan in Ray Bradbury. A bonus is the *Frank Buck* and *Doc McCoy* movies, which feature the one-legged actor who fancies himself in the part. Peter Weymark

RADIO CHOICE

Nothing in the subsequent life of George Best altered the fact that he possessed a sublime football talent. Tonight and tomorrow night he makes a welcome reappearance in an unusual role as the narrator of this two-part that is in many ways a microcosm of the troubles that beset Northern Ireland. Best knows a thing or two about those (his sister was shot by terrorists) and here he tells a story of hopes dashed. Belfast Celtic was a non-sectarian football team which won countless trophies. But, long before the present troubles, in 1969, a sectarian crowd of 100,000 invaded a game against Linfield, erupted with pitch invasions and even shots fired. Fifty years ago this week, the club was forced to fold. Peter Marandis

RADIO 1 (BBC)

RADIO 2 (BBC)

RADIO 5 LIVE (BR)

VIRGIN

TALK RADIO

Headlines, Sh...
12.04pm You a

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.8-99.8. **RADIO 2.** 92.4-94.6. **LW** 198; **MW** 720. **RADIO 5 LIVE.** MW 593. **90 CLASSIC FM.** FM 100-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM 105.8. **M** Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes.

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00pm The World Today 7.00 News 7.25 On The Shelf
Christmas Eve At The End Of The Road 7.30pm 2000
News 8.15 Praise for Thought 8.15 The Music Party 8.00
News 8.45 91st News in German 9.00 World Business Report
8.15 Who Was St Nicholas 9.00 Plays in Focus: The Glass
Menageries 9.45 Sports Round-Up 10.00 Newsweek 10.30 On
Christmas 11.00pm 17. The Great Gatsby 11.15 On the
12.00pm News 12.05 World Business Report 12.25
12.30pm Health Matters 12.45 Sports Round-Up 1.00
Newsround 2.00 News 2.05 On Today 2.30 Matchlink Fit List 3.00
News 3.45 91st News in German 3.55 Sports Round-Up 3.15
On Today 3.30 The Christmas Special 3.45 News 3.55
Global Vision 4.00pm Inland (845) 91st News in German 4.40
Britain Today 5.00 News Today 5.30 World Business Report
5.45 Sports Round-Up 6.00 Newsweek 6.30 One Planet (845)
91st News in German 7.00 News Saturday 7.01 On Today 7.25
On Today 7.30 The Christmas Special 7.45 News 7.55
9.05 World Business Report 9.15 Britain Today 9.30 Mendenhall
Live 10.00 Newsweek 10.30 Insights 10.45 Sports Round-Up
11.00 News 11.05 On Today 11.30 Magrams 12.00pm
Newsweek 12.30 Wirepage 12.45 Britain Today 1.00
Newsweek 1.30 Discovery 2.00 Newsday 2.30 Mendenhall
Live 3.00 Newsweek 3.30 On Today 3.45 Sports Round-Up
3.50 On Today 4.00 The World Report

CLASSIC FM

6.00pm Nick Bailey's Easter Recital; **8.00** Henry Kelly, The Hall of Fame Hour and Record of the Week, plus favourite records chosen by listeners; **12.00** Lunchtime Requests; **2.00pm** Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood); **3.00** Jamie Knox, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **4.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **5.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **6.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **7.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **8.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **9.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **10.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **11.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request; **12.00** Jamieson, Concerto, Partisan (Little Red Riding Hood) and Request.

RADIO 3

7.30 Performance at St. Patrick AD, given on August 18.
 8.00 *Wolcott-Johnson, baritone; 2SSG Singers; BBC Symphony Orchestra, London; Silver Singers; and Stephen Cleobury, Messiaen (1 ascension); George Benjamin (Sometime Voices); Robin Maheu (I turn to the Senses); Scriabin (The Poem of Ecstasy) (1)*

8.00 *Postscript: Rainer Hersh's 20th-Century Retrospective (2/5)*

8.20 *Celestial Trio: Thomas Zeschmar, violin; Tabes Zimmermann, viola; and Michael Schaubert (Shining Trio in B flat, D471); Schoenberg (Shining Trio, Op 46); Mozart (Divertimento in E flat) (1)*

8.45 *Music and Lyrics: Robert Cushman presents a performance of (1)*

11.30 *Jazz Notes: Ayn Shapiro presents Ray Parker in concert with Red Holloway and the Colin Porter Trio in 1985 (1)*

12.00 *Composers of the Week: Bach (1)*

1.00am *Through the Night with Donald Macleod.*

1.00 The Bach Family 3.10 Ken Barrie

2.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

3.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

4.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

5.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

6.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

7.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

8.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

9.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

10.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

11.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

12.00 *Chopin's Fugue and Fugue on B-flat 3.30 Amiga String Quartet No 1*

1.00am *Through the Night with Donald Macleod.*

RADIO 4

3.46 Colonel Jack — Master of Disguises by Grant
Tinker, read by Martin Jarvis (2/5)

4.00 A Cold River Runs to the Sea by Walter Bel
Mooney and Dr Mark Porter to discuss three
favourite paperbacks

4.30 The Public Business Rules, presented by
Heather Payton

5.00 PM with Clara English and Chris Lowe

6.00 The O'Clock News

6.30 4 of the stars read comedy from Lord's of
Comedy Store, hosted by Simon Jones

7.00 The Anchors: 7.15 Front Row Fringe Show
The Anchors: 7.15 Front Row Fringe Show
Walsh's stories on a new film based on Irvine
Welsh's stories

7.45 Under One Roof Part two (1)

8.00 A Mission to Chivasso: Overseas Out-Auction
are the winners in this number of Serpentine
are turning their backs on Paris

8.40 In Touch Peter White with looks for visually
impaired

9.00 Case Notes Graham Easton looks at the future of
share-pair medicine

9.30 The Big Medicine

10.00 The Wolf Tonight with Robin Lustig

10.45 Christmas Book at Bedtime: Joe Alford reads
A Child's Christmas in Wales, by Dylan Thomas.

11.00 Little Man on the Ice How Show Stand-up
comedy, hosted by Peter Runt and John Harris,
with Simon Munnelly, Dan Freedman, Neil
Rusmore, David Dupirell and Jane Sussman

11.30 (LW) Comedy in the West

11.30 Talking Pictures Russell Davies presents
the pick of the Christmas cinema releases

12.00 7.15 Front Row Fringe Show
12.30am The Late Book: Out of the
Seasons — The Christmas season
Written by the Times columnist Lynda Moss, read
by Miriam Margolyes

FM 88.0-90.2, RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 8

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SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

What's it all about, Geoffrey, my old mate?

It comes as a jolt to discover how close we were to last night's glorious animation of *The Canterbury Tales* (BBC2) turning into a medieval *Stella Street*, the fictional series on BBC2 about a suburban street inhabited by Michael Caine, Jack Nicholson, Joe Pesci, Mick Jagger and Al Pacino among many improbable others. Jonathan Myerson, who directed the two half-hour films (the second is shown tonight), cracked the problem of how to translate Chaucer to the screen when he was staring at the telly one Friday night and Alfie came on the screen and Michael Caine broke away from the unfolding story to speak directly at the camera as though filling in on the background of a few friends he was about to introduce us to. That was about it. Chaucer came to be the vehicle by which the individual stories and their tellers were conveyed to an audience who had either never

read Chaucer, or who had read him but could only now remember that he seemed to be a terrible spell for such a bright, eloquent man. Sensibly deciding that there was no point being too reverent with Chaucer's words, Myerson has crafted a screenplay which sounds modern without being ridiculously modern, by trying to incorporate say, rap sequences. So the first thing we hear is Chaucer (Bob Peck's voice) telling us that "When April's soft showers have cracked the March drought, and the warm west wind has breathed his sweet breeze through tender buds, that's when people get the itch to go on a pilgrimage." (Or, as it could so easily have been, had Myerson made an even shorter leap between Alfie and Geoffrey, "Ere, listen up fellas. You may not believe this, but I'm telling you that all it takes is a little bit of rain in April, and a touch of warm weaver, and people go completely mum and dad, for

getting how bleedin' miserable it was in March and before you know it...")

The production is a Michelin-starred "tasting menu" of animation techniques, which move seamlessly from one to the next in spite of their very different styles. In this first episode - covering *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, *The Knight's Tale* and *The Wife of Bath's Tale* - the pilgrims are created in 3-D stop-frame animation by Chris and John Wood. The team that worked on the animated Shakespeare series which, like *The Canterbury Tales*, was also co-produced by the Welsh channel S4C and the BBC: *The Nun's Priest's Tale* and *The Wife of Bath's Tale* are animated by the same team, while *The Knight's Tale* is animated by the Cardiff-based Beryl Productions. Among the other voices, you can hear Robert

coral anniversary) contest between the 1963's winning team, the University of Leicester, and the current champions, Magdalen College, Oxford. Having failed to win the race to succeed Bamber Gascoigne as quizmaster, Michael Caine was missing here too. Instead it fell once again to Jeremy Paxman to jolly along this parade of age before beauty - or, as Dorothy Parker might have put it had she been studying at Leicester in 1963, pearls before swine.

It was a pretty even match until the final few minutes, when the senior team - perhaps they were buzzier, perhaps they had learnt over the years that there are more important things in life than general knowledge - slipped behind. They ended up with 145 points to Magdalen's 220. In another special edition of *University Challenge* on New Year's Day, tabloid journalists will face those from

broadsheets: more than enough age, beauty, pearls and swine there to suit all tastes.

Here's your starter for ten: traffic wardens - pearls or swine? The *Clampers* at Christmas (BBC1) was a generous gesture of goodwill by the BBC. It enabled us to look back on the past year and reflect that - for all the awful things we had done - at least we hadn't clamped a car parked in a suburban residential backstreet in South London on a Saturday afternoon, when a hefty parking ticket would have achieved the same result (but obviously without generating the same pleasure for the clamped).

"People's tempers are at a high level at the moment," sighed Ray Brown (yes, that Ray, I'm afraid), as he immobilised yet another car. "You don't want to get clamped when you're out buying presents. It's not a nice time of year to do this

job. It's not a nice time *anytime* to do this job, but this time of year makes it ten times harder." He obviously meant ten times harder to clamp every car eligible for clamping, because clamping seems to be as vital for Ray's survival as constant swimming is for a shark.

As for that man whose car Ray had clamped in a residential backstreet in Southwark, he asked Ray why he didn't just issue a ticket. "I just simply follow the rules," replied Brown.

Imagine if it had been Stella Street, and it was Joe Pesci's car that Ray had clamped. "Ugh," Michael would have said, eyeing the clamp and then turning to confide in us through the camera: "You know I've got a funny feeling that when my mate Joe sees what's happened to his motor, Ray is going to be turned into a lump of Plasticine without any help from Christmas Films - if you get my drift."

Imagine if it had been Stella Street, and it was Joe Pesci's car that Ray had clamped. "Ugh," Michael would have said, eyeing the clamp and then turning to confide in us through the camera: "You know I've got a funny feeling that when my mate Joe sees what's happened to his motor, Ray is going to be turned into a lump of Plasticine without any help from Christmas Films - if you get my drift."

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (04083)
 - 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (05067)
 - 9.00 Children's BBC: Sweet Valley High (7814716) 9.25 The Fame Game (7817803) 9.55 Teletubbies (9071803)
 - 10.20 News: Weather (0) (8306613)
 - 10.30 The Nutcracker Prince (1990) Animated version of the Christmas classic about a magical prince who whiskes a young girl off on an adventure. With the voices of Kiefer Sutherland and Megan Follows (0) (8136468)
 - 11.40 The New Adventures of Superman A journalist threatens to expose Superman's true identity (0) (1312990)
 - 12.25pm Wipeout Celebrity Special (0) (824813)
 - 12.50 The Weather Show (0) (73802735)
 - 1.00 One O'Clock News (0) (83754)
 - 1.30 Regional News: Weather (45178203)
 - 1.40 Neighbours (0) (9717396)
 - 2.00 Battersea Dogs' Home Prince Michael Kent visits the refuge (86063551)
 - 2.35 Due South: Fraser and Ray, rescue an eccentric old man who believes he is a spy, intercepts a package destined for a real estate agent (0) (2889532)
 - 3.20 Children's BBC: Noddy (8702735) 3.30 Casper (8232174) 3.50 Chucklevision (8252938) 4.10 Noah's Island (8191713) 4.35 Cartoon Critics (8521193) 5.00 Newsround (8205071) 5.10 It's Never Work (8671067)
 - 5.35 Neighbours (0) (1) (829990)
 - 6.00 Six O'Clock News: Weather (0) (445)
 - 6.30 Regional News: Weather (0) (375)
 - 7.00 Holiday: Eastern Yarn Seasonal Craig Doyle attempts to control a team of hussies in Finnish Lapland and Alice Bear jets off to Florida to become a cast member at Walt Disney World (0) (8735)
 - 7.30 EastEnders (0) (203)
 - 8.00 Airport at Christmas A special VHS edition of the as-it-happens-Heathrow documentary (0) (563)
 - 8.30 Mystery: with Carol Vorderman Dogs who saved their owners' lives and a woman who claims she can converse for diamonds (last in series) (0) (4890)
 - 9.00 Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (0) (884)
 - 9.30 Speed (1994) LAPD anti-terrorist expert, Keanu Reeves pulls out all the stops to thwart a psychopath who's planned a bomb on a bus, primed to detonate if the vehicle's speed drops below 50mph. High-octane thriller, also starring Dennis Hopper, Sandra Bullock and Jeff Daniels. Directed by Jan De Bont (0) (296718)
 - 11.20 Celine Dion: These Are Special Times Concert by the singer (0) (880025)
 - 12.00 Staying Alive (1983) John Travolta returns as Tony Manero in this sequel to Saturday Night Fever, which sees him attempting to make his name on Broadway. Directed by Sylvester Stallone (0) (1185)
 - 1.30am Stolen Candles (1984) A teenager's parents forget her birthday - so she tries to get over her disappointment by searching for the men of her dreams. Comedy drama, starring Molly Ringwald. Directed by John Hughes (0) (883955)
 - 2.55 Weather (7223232)
 - 3.00 BBC News 24 (5425502)

- BBC2**
- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: The Little Polar Bear (833281) 7.05 Teletubbies - (808003) 7.30 Yoga Treasure Hunt (974980) 7.50 Blue Peter (1985006) 8.15 Eat the Cat (8013613) 8.30 Taz-Mania (79191) 9.00 Animal World: Warmers (894208) 10.00pm The Tales of Canterbury (81735) 12.30 The Simpsons (458049) 12.55 The Simpsons (2470754)
 - 1.15 Rex the Runt (0) (1) (7187137)
 - 1.25 Rex the Runt (0) (1) (7186251)
 - 1.35 Timewatch The personal recollections of six World War Two veterans who acted as spies during the conflict (0) (1) (8105332)
 - 2.25 The West Account of pioneers' westward migration (0) (8890006)
 - 3.50 News: Weather (0) (8972358)
 - 3.55 El Dorado (1987) Ageing gunfighter John Wayne and drunken sheriff Robert Mitchum take on a villainous cattle baron. With James Caan. Directed by Howard Hawks (0) (83837445)
 - 6.00 The Simpsons Mr Burns advertises for a son and heir (0) (841025)
 - 6.25 Rex the Runt The gang crash-land on Easter Island (0) (723621)
 - 6.35 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Jake and Nog bid for a rare baseball card, only to find themselves entering into a bizarre business deal (0) (723621)
 - 7.20 Rex the Runt The pals lose their house and can't be bothered to look for it (0) (214803)
 - 7.30 The Canterbury Tales Another three tales are revealed (22) (0) (551)
 - 8.00 Food and Drink Seasonal cookery tips, including easy party foods, a vegetarian Christmas dinner alternative and the best wines for less than £12. Presented by Chris Kelly, Antony Worrall Thompson, Jilly Goodwin and Oz Clarke (0) (3025)
 - 8.30 Two Fat Ladies The larger-than-life chefs travel to Jamaica, where they prepare pumpkin soup, jerk pig and a festive rum punch (0) (2632)
 - 9.00 Butterflies Festive episode of the wildlife comedy, starring Wendy Craig and Geoffrey Palmer (0) (1) (275)
 - 9.30 Agnes and Her Children Exploration of the British middle-class, passionate relationship with the Age of Cook (0) (877203)
 - 10.20 A Woman Called Smith An adopted woman's marriage preparations (0) (1) (17714)
 - 10.30 Neighbours (0) (192651)
 - 11.15 Brothers and Sisters Stochan gets involved in her son's drug problems (843358)
 - 11.55 Hidden Fortress (1955) Akira Kurosawa's adventure about a 16th-century samurai escorting a princess through enemy territory. Toshio Miyagi stars (5104025)
 - 2.10am Weather (8432304) 2.15 Close

- HTV**
- 5.55am ITN Morning News (8502445)
 - 6.00 GMTV (1088193)
 - 9.25 ITN News (0) (4348822)
 - 9.30 ITN News (0) (5238950)
 - 9.35 ITN News of Today: Try Toon Adventures (814687) 10.00 Rocky and the Dodos (3308358) 10.15 At Attack Christmas Cracker (565433)
 - 10.45 The NeverEnding Story II: The Next Chapter (1990) Premiere. The young hero returns to the magical world of Fantasia. Directed by George Miller (0) (8510551)
 - 12.20pm ITN News and Weather (0) (877035)
 - 12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (0) (81454)
 - 1.00 Scotland Street (48822)
 - 1.30 Crossroads (0) (80735)
 - 2.00 Wheel of Fortune (0) (7087)
 - 2.30 ITN News Headlines (0) (8861057)
 - 2.35 ITN News (0) (8860338)
 - 2.40 Sharpe Sharpe is assigned to restore peace in the North (23) (0) (7860890)
 - 4.40 Survival Special (0) (8327613)
 - 5.40 ITN Early Evening News (0) (439984)
 - 6.00 The Baldy Man (83551)
 - 6.25 WALLS: Wales Tonight: Weather (0) (140025)
 - 6.25 WEST: HTV Weather (53919)
 - 6.30 The West Tonight (0) (183)
 - 7.00 Emmerdale Pollard embarks on a new business venture (0) (1803)
 - 7.30 WEST: Beattie's Hot Shots Humorous home movies (0) (377)
 - 7.30 WALLS: Celtic Radicals (0) (377)
 - 8.00 The Bill A routine trip to the vet with his mother's cat leads Quinn into a major drug operation (0) (2525)
 - 9.00 Collier Hill: Rose Angela and her sick father make up for lost time (0) (513)
 - 10.00 News at Ten: Weather (0) (29519)
 - 10.15 HTV News and Weather (0) (174087)
 - 10.25 The Things You Do for Love Fact-based drama about the singer Ronnie Hilton's romance with an aspiring dancer (0) (272390)
 - 11.30 In Search of Tarzan with a screen history of the jungle hero (0) (85071)
 - 12.35am Tarzan the Magnificent (1960) The jungle hero captures a notorious criminal, but is forced to take him through the jungle with his accomplices in hot pursuit. With Gordon Scott. Directed by Robert Day (0) (350323)
 - 2.10 The Head and the Heart (885033)
 - 2.15 Bloody Mary (1970) A psychotic woman goes on a rampage against society along with her homicidal children. Shocking thriller, starring Shelley Long and Robert De Niro. Directed by Roger Corman (780030)
 - 4.05 Cyberspace (0) (1853528)
 - 4.35 Football Extra (4211304)
 - 5.30 ITV Newsround (9746168)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 9.30-9.35am Central News (5239990)
 - 12.20-12.30pm Central News: Weather (870735)
 - 1.00-1.30 Echo Point (48822)
 - 2.35-2.40 Central News (8860338)
 - 6.00 Beattie's Hot Shots (83551)
 - 6.25-7.00 Central News: Weather (140025)
 - 7.30-8.00 Heart of the Country (377)
 - 10.15-10.25 Central News: Weather (174087)
 - 2.35am FILM: Ernest Saves Christmas (171575)
 - 4.10 Central Jobfinder '98 (4468781)
 - 5.00-5.55 Football Extra (312558)
- WESTCOUNTRY**
- As HTV West except:
 - 9.30am Westcountry News (5239990)
 - 9.35-9.35am Birthday People (5239990)
 - 12.15-12.25pm Westcountry News: Weather (3391071)
 - 12.27-12.30 Carol for Christmas (8788754)
 - 1.00-1.30 Emmerdale (48822)
 - 2.35-2.40 Westcountry News: Weather (890338)
 - 6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (89493)
 - 7.30-8.00 Held in Trust (377)
 - 10.15-10.25 Westcountry News: Weather (174087)
- MERIDIAN**
- As HTV West except: 12.15pm-12.30 Meridian News: Weather (5391071) 1.00-1.30 Hope and Glory: 6.00 Meridian Tonight (0) (183) 6.30-7.00 Aspinall's Animals (0) (183) 7.30-8.00 Meridian Focus (0) (377) 10.15-10.25 Meridian News: Weather (0) (174087)
- ANGLES**
- As HTV West except: 12.15pm Anglia Air Watch (8860342) 12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather (870735) 1.00-1.30 Dinosaur (48822) 5.35-5.40 Anglia Air Watch (871754) 6.00 Beattie's Hot Shots (0) (83551) 6.23 Anglia Weather (854648) 6.25-7.00 Anglia News (0) (140025) 7.30-8.00 Out to Lunch with Brian Turner (0) (377) 10.14 Anglia Air Watch (184484) 10.15-10.25 Anglia News and Weather (0) (174087)
- S4C**
- Starts: 5.55am Sesame Street (0) (4370280) 7.00 For Better, For Worse (4803735) 7.30 The Magic School Bus (803342) 8.00 The Big Breakfast (2161290) 10.00 The Bigger Breakfast: Planet Pop (1262277) 10.30 Earle, Indiana (0) (7158708) 10.55 The Secret World of Alex Mack (1028071) 11.30 Moshie (0) (4783551) 12.00pm Madison (4872230) 12.30 Judy Turner (0) (4690006) 1.30 Classic Aircraft (0) (4330548) 2.30 Personal Services (0) (18854008) 2.30 Frances Bessell's West Country Christmas (23) (0) (1238358) 3.00 Wine Hunt (26) (0) (15780813) 3.30 Toot Stories (0) (1121800) 4.00 Fifteen-to-One Highlights (0) (1125038) 4.30 Planned Plant (4278503) 5.30 Countdown (0) (1120374) 6.00 Newyddion 6 (0) (1883193) 6.10 Heno (0) (8055119) 7.00 Cynffwrdd (1885822) 7.30 Canu Gwlad O'r Gwlad (0) (7243174) 8.30 Newyddion 1 (1885377) 9.00 Broodolddio Christmas Special (0) (7915071) 10.35 Eurotrash: Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells (0) (1452280) 11.05 Fraser (0) (6674281) 11.35 The Real Hollywood Show (0) (7575071) 12.05am This Bloke Walks into a Bar (0) (8213233) 1.05 Reggie Boyz: The Fans (0) (3573217) 2.05 Diddled

- CHANNEL 4**
- 5.05am Sharky and George (0) (7299994)
 - 5.35 Two Stupid Dogs (0) (9103880)
 - 5.55 Sesame Street (8002261)
 - 7.00 For Better, For Worse (0) (47183)
 - 7.30 The Magic School Bus (0) (53700)
 - 8.00 The Big Breakfast (14759)
 - 10.00 The Bigger Breakfast: Planet Pop (84229)
 - 10.30 Earle, Indiana (0) (7158708)
 - 10.55 The Secret World of Alex Mack (0) (4214822)
 - 11.30 Moshie (0) (5087)
 - 12.00 Madison (46803)
 - 12.30pm The Thief of Baghdad (1940) Arabian Nights adventure about a young thief who helps a deposed king regain his throne. Sabu, Rex Ingram and Conrad Veidt star. Directed by Ludwig Berger. With Michael Powell (0) (4042)
 - 2.30 Frances Bessell's West Country Christmas Turkey with all the trimmings and alternative ideas for festive bashes (23) (0) (754)
 - 3.00 Wine Hunt (26) (0) (7464)
 - 3.30 Toot Stories Creating a Roman spa in a rooftop bathroom and designing the perfect nursery (0) (241)
 - 4.00 Fifteen-to-One Highlights (0) (826)
 - 4.30 Countdown (0) (8515532)
 - 4.55 Pet Rescue (0) (7841087)
 - 5.30 Pet Rescue Awards (23) (0) (342)
 - 6.00 Ted Viles TV Sean Cullen stars as power-hungry multi-millionaire media mogul Ted Viles (0) (70725)
 - 7.00 Channel 4 News: Weather (0) (134193)

- CHANNEL 5**
- 6.00am 5 News and Sport (8165464)
 - 7.00 Wintzle's House (0) (8916551)
 - 7.30 Milkshake! (2555551)
 - 7.55 Havalakoo (0) (8127754)
 - 8.00 George of the Jungle (0) (7538006)
 - 8.30 What's-Mess: 5 News Update (837377)
 - 9.00 Loggheads (0) (7528929)
 - 9.30 USA High (0) (1258087)
 - 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (8003464)
 - 10.20 Sunset Beach Cole hides on the balcony (0) (2041795)
 - 11.10 Lezza (0) (8413483)
 - 11.55 Russell Grant's Postcards (8985193)
 - 12.00 5 News at Noon (0) (731193)
 - 12.30pm Family Affairs (0) (1212803)
 - 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful James tries to find out what's wrong with Stephanie (0) (8915822)
 - 1.30 Sons and Daughters Beryl reprimands David; 5 News Update (1211174)
 - 2.00 Good Afternoon Lifestyle magazine, incorporating real-life soap Liverpool Mums, the animal antics of Pets Go Public and word game Cryptogram: 5 News Update (106529)
 - 3.30 The Christmas Gift (TVM 1986) An architect set to survey a small Colorado town for possible development finds its charm consumes him and he is soon fighting against his boss in a bid to preserve it. Morality drama, starring John Denver. Directed by Michael Pressman (0) (7554718)
 - 5.20 The Roseanne Show Entertainment and chat; 5 News Update (8038648)
 - 6.00 100 Per Cent (2367193)



Robert Mitchum stars as a determined US Navy captain (7.15pm)



Sedie (Barbara Young) receives some visitors (8.30pm)

- SKY 1**
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SPORTS BOOKS 32

Honest account of Adams's life and times is required reading

SPORT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 22 1998

FOOTBALL 36

Is South Africa's bid for the World Cup in 2006 a credible one?

Suspended striker delays return

Di Canio puts Wednesday career at risk

BY RICHARD HOBSON

THE future of Paolo Di Canio is cloudier today than at any time during a volatile career with Sheffield Wednesday after Moreno Roggi, his lawyer, suggested yesterday that the player may continue to defy the club by delaying a return to England from Italy until the new year.

An 11-match ban imposed by the Football Association after Di Canio pushed Paul Alcock, the referee, to the ground during a tempestuous FA Carling Premiership game against Arsenal three months ago has now expired. However, Di Canio claims that he is suffering from stress and depression and possesses a medical certificate, signed by an Italian doctor, which is valid until January 4.

Di Canio went home after the incident on September 26 and rejoined Wednesday on November 27, but has not been seen by club officials since he was allowed compassionate leave to bring his wife and baby daughter to England 18 days ago.

Wednesday want their own doctors to conduct an examination. They expected him back on December 6 and discovered only through the Premier League yesterday that Di Canio has appealed against a two-week club suspension, without pay, imposed at the weekend and backdated to December 12.

Although Wednesday have declined to place their record £4.7million signing from Celtic on the transfer list, his long-term future surely lies elsewhere. His value continues to depreciate while he remains out of action and Wednesday may eventually rue the decision not to make him available immediately after the assault on Alcock.

Di Canio, 30, committed

himself to the club immediately after the FA disciplinary commission imposed the ban in October and again at a press conference called to mark his return to training at the end of last month. On both occasions he emphasised a desire to play against Leicester City on Boxing Day.

According to sources in Italy, though, he is concerned at the treatment he might receive from referees in England, many of whom felt that the punishment meted out by the FA did not match the seriousness of the offence. He also feels that Wednesday should fly a medical team to his family home in Terni, 60 miles north of Rome, if they want to corroborate the findings of the Italian doctors.

Graham Mackrell, the Wednesday secretary, said: "He is a contracted employee and we are entitled to expect him to work. There are 206 employees here and we do not go looking for them when they fail to turn up. Any suggestion of us flying out to talk to him is out of the question."



Di Canio: depressed

Brendan Batson, the deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, believes it is in Di Canio's best interest to return. "If he has differences to sort out then he needs to be talking to the club," Batson said.

A Premier League hearing to discuss Di Canio's appeal will not be convened until the new year. He has already been fined four weeks' wages by Wednesday — a total of around £68,000 — as well as £10,000 by the FA. With legal costs touching £12,000 the cost of his action will reach £124,000 if the League find against him.

Gerard Houllier, the Liverpool manager, must break off from his priority of signing a central defender because Karl-Heinz Riedle seeks talks over his future. Riedle, out of contract at the end of the season, has started only one of the past 11 matches and is prepared to ask for a transfer if Houllier can not offer reassurance.

The Germany striker joined from Borussia Dortmund shortly after scoring twice in the 1997 European Cup final win against Juventus, but his arrival coincided with the emergence of Michael Owen and Houllier has often preferred Robbie Fowler as Owen's partner.

"I have had enough of being a reserve," Riedle said. With Steve McManaman due to return against Middlesbrough on Boxing Day after a ten-month absence because of an Achilles problem, there is no shortage of attacking options.

Houllier has turned to Rigobert Song, a Cameroon international best known as the youngest player to be sent off in the World Cup finals at the age of 17 four years ago, in his latest attempt to shore up the Liverpool defence. Song left Metz for Salernitana in a £2.7million deal in the summer, but his new club are second from bottom of Serie A in Italy and allowed Song to spend last week on trial at Anfield.

Matthew Le Tissier has admitted that he may finally quit Southampton if the club is relegated from the Premiership at the end of the season. Le Tissier said it would be "very difficult" for him to play in the Nationwide League.

"I would put money on us staying up, but then I have always liked a long shot," Le Tissier said. "I want to play in the Premier League for the whole of my career. That's the one thing I have always wanted to do."

"I think I'm good enough to play in the Premier League for the rest of my playing days. It would be very difficult for me to play in the first division."

Newcastle agm, page 21



Maier attacks a gate in typically determined style on his way to victory in the super giant slalom yesterday, to be followed home by eight team-mates

Maier leads unprecedented sweep

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

HERMANN MAIER led the Austrian team into the history books yesterday with an unprecedented sweep of the first nine places in a World Cup super giant slalom at Innsbruck. Maier, a double Olympic champion at Nagano, emerged victorious at the famous Patscherkofel Olympic course, then his teammates helped to restore the prestige of Austrian skiing in distinguished fashion after recent setbacks.

Franz Klammer, an Austrian national hero who won the Olympic downhill title at the same course, was at the finish line to congratulate his compatriots, while classes in the Innsbruck area were closed as schoolchildren witnessed the feat of their idols.

Maier said: "It was a sensational race for me and for the

team. We need more races like this. The course was perfect, and the fans gave me a big boost. I just wanted to win here. This race was very special to me."

Never in World Cup history had skiers from the same country finished 1-9 in men's or women's races. The previous best team showing dated back to 1968, when French women filled the first six positions in a downhill race at Abetone, Italy. Austrian skiers had already swept the top five places in a super giant slalom at Aspen, Colorado, last month.

Maier recorded a time of 1min 23.52sec down the 1,947-metre course, dropping 570 metres. Christian Mayer and Fritz Strobl were placed

second and third respectively in the third super giant slalom race of the season, Mayer trailing the winner by 0.76sec and Strobl one-hundredth of a second further back.

Stephan Eberharter, who finished fourth, Rainer Salzberger (fifth) and Hans Knesner (sixth) were also split by just one-hundredth.

The race, which began 65 minutes late after fog had hampered visibility, looked like the Austrian national championships at late starters such as Patrick Wirth and Werner Franz helped to set up the record-breaking finish.

Lasse Paulsen, of Norway, was the first of the non-Austrian finishers in tenth place, with a gap of 1.01sec. Maier's third victory of the season, the thirteenth of his World Cup career, put the strongly built Austrian competitor on top of the overall standings.

With 540 points after 12 races, Maier took over the leadership by three points from Lasse Kjus, of Norway, who slipped to second place as he could only finish in fourteenth place in the race yesterday. Mayer moved into third place with 462 points, ahead of Eberharter.

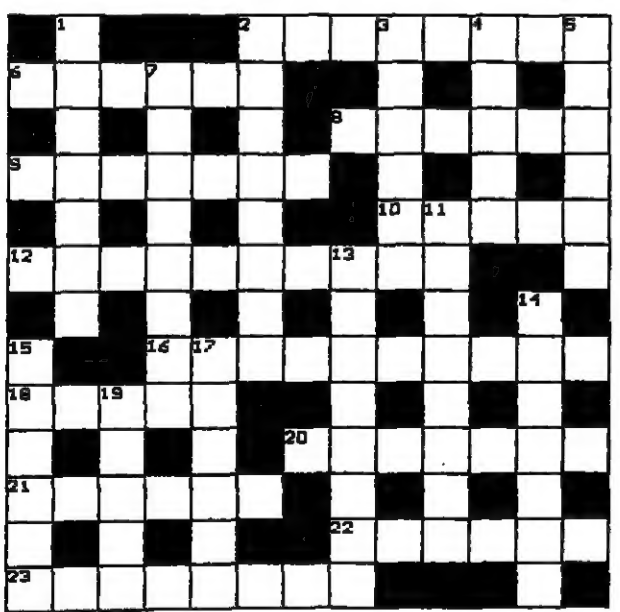
Maier, the defending World Cup overall champion, super giant slalom and giant slalom champion, also claimed a commanding lead in the super

giant slalom standings. The Austrian favourite, who could only finish fourth in the two previous races at Gardena and Alta Badia, had to turn around when he hit the snow with a hand as he struggled to clear a gate.

Strobl, who was placed third starting with the No 45 bib, said the success "looked a lot of pressure out of us". He added: "Third place also gives me a lot of morale for coming races. We certainly have the best super giant team."

The men's World Cup continues at Bormio, northern Italy, a week from today. The Austrians will be aiming for their first downhill victory in the fourth speed race of the season, after six wins in the three other disciplines of Alpine skiing.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1595

ACROSS

- 2 Ignore (4,4): Jewish festival (8)
- 6 Harsh, painful: a drink (6)
- 8 Tricked by practical joke (6)
- 9 Perfect: studio TV (7)
- 10 Grasping, lifting tool (5)
- 12 Aggressive patriotism (10)
- 16 Irregular (10)
- 18 Grow-up (5)
- 20 US grasslands (7)
- 21 Roman army unit: host (6)
- 22 Rich merchantman (arch. poet) (6)
- 23 Toulou (8)

DOWN

- 1 Disciple of Paul: a grass (7)
- 2 Relative importance (8)
- 3 Plays: creatures not bred true (6)
- 4 Fox's mate (5)
- 5 Pungent salad root (6)
- 7 Court: board of inquiry (8)
- 11 Leaving out (8)
- 13 Deathless (8)
- 14 Most insignificant (7)
- 15 Colourless (6)
- 17 Comedian's straight man (6)
- 19 Strong promptings (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1594

- ACROSS: 1 Canyons 5 Hush 8 Bang 9 Gobbling
10 Come true 11 Thaw 12 Hearth 14 Throbs 16 Fit
18 Pristine 20 So-called 21 About 22 Herd 23 Dilate
DOWN: 2 A la mode 3 Vague 4 Sugar the pill 5 Holster 6 Santa
7 Absent-minded 13 Rutland 15 Banquet 17 Loose 19 Trail

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Redknapp ready to read riot act

Russell Kempson reports on more off-field problems for West Ham

Drinks, cars, footballers... a heady cocktail of alcohol, speed on wheels and trendy young professionals with money to burn. It frequently ends in tears and often in the courts, as Neil Ruddock and Trevor Sinclair, the West Ham United players, will discover when they appear before Romford magistrates today.

Ruddock, 30, is charged with affray and Sinclair, 25, with criminal damage after an alleged incident involving a girl in a mini — a small vehicle, not a dress — outside a nightclub in Essex on Saturday night. The former England players had earlier attended a Christmas party at a nearby wine bar.

Spirits were high, after the FA Carling Premiership club's 2-1 victory against Everton, in which Sinclair had scored, that afternoon. The onset of yuletide celebrations and fancy-dress attire from the Seventies — flared trousers and kipper ties were mandatory — added to the festive cheer.

After the horseplay had split over into the streets, though, the mood, apparently, turned ugly. Ruddock, Sinclair and Richard Nelson, a youth worker who is believed to be a friend of Sinclair, are said to have become involved in a disagreement with a teenage beauty therapist. The aesthetic appearance of her car was apparently rearranged and the police were called.

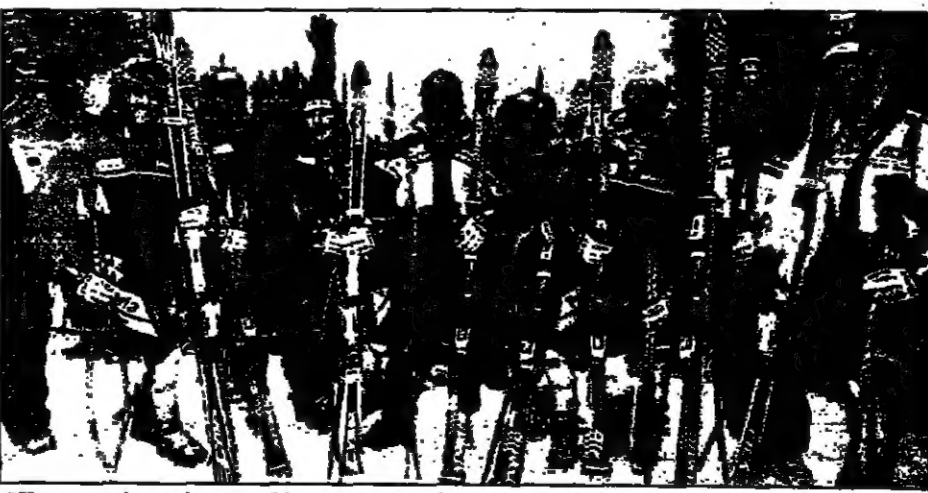
Harry Redknapp, the long-suffering West Ham manager, was not pleased. Already this season, he has had to contend with the continuing adventures of John Harrison, his disciplinary-challenged Wales striker, who was filmed kicking Eyal Berkovic, the Israel midfielder player, in the head during a training session. Although West Ham tried to keep the kung-fu exhibition secret, their cover was blown when footage of the incident was released.

Harrison also erred on a re-

fueled expedition to his native Swansea, when he was spotted using a hanging basket as a football in the city centre. He pleaded guilty, was fined and offered to replace the basket. Fortunately, he was not involved on Saturday.

Sinclair is not noted for his extra-curricular activities, but Ruddock's past could be best described as checkered. Although particularly ashen-faced, Sinclair and Ruddock had nothing to say for themselves at West Ham's training ground at Chadwell Heath yesterday.

They readily signed autographs for the many children who had waited for them, perhaps oblivious to their heroes' alleged nocturnal exploits. Before taking their leave, judging by Sinclair's silly headgear — a deerstalker hat — they might have had another fancy-dress party to go to.



History makers: the record-breaking Austrian skiers look forward to a night of celebration

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SAUDI ARABIA	38	102	83%	USA	8	24	78%
ISRAEL	10	79	87%	CANADA	8	24	78%
GERMANY	6	29	79%	AUSTRALIA	7	49	88%
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